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The Advent

The beautiful body of a soul at ease.....

Savitri II.2. SRI AUROBINDO

The ADVENT

NOVEMBER, 1956

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All who are truly strong and powerful are always very calm. It is only the weak who are restless. True calmness is always a sign of forcefulness.

THE MOTHER

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THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

EDITORIALS*

PRAYER AND ASPIRATION

THERE are many kinds of prayer. There is a prayer, purely mechanical and physical, that is to say, merely words learnt by rote and repeated machine-like. It does not mean much and generally has only one effect, making the person calm who prays; if you repeat a prayer several times, it calms you in the end.

There is a prayer which is a formula welling out spontaneously in order to give expression to something very precise which you ask for. You may pray for some thing, for some person, you may pray even for certain circumstances, you may pray for yourself also.

Or you may pray to express your gratitude to the Divine for what He has done for you, for what you see in Him, for what you wish to do to Him in thankfulness. Evidently it is the highest kind of prayer, for it is not exclusively concerned with one's own self. It is of a great order, this prayer of thanksgiving.

*Based on the Mother's Talks

It is the meeting ground of prayer and aspiration. Such prayers are the spontaneous formulation of an experience that has been lived; it pours out from within the being, as the expression of a deep realisation, a yearning to sing praises for this experience that has been granted, a desire that the experience may continue or be explained. All this is very near to aspiration.

Again there is a prayer, spontaneous and disinterested, a great call as it were, a call for divine intercession. It is a very powerful thing. I have had innumerable examples of things being fulfilled instantaneously by prayers of this kind. It means a great faith, a great fervour, a great sincerity, also a great simplicity of heart—something that does not calculate, that does not arrange, that does not bargain, that does not give with the idea of a return.

(2)

You can pray in all domains. A prayer belongs to the domain in which you pray.

Prayers may be purely physical, even material. They may be vital or mental or psychic or spiritual. Each one has its own character and its own value.

Prayer is a thing much more external than aspiration. It concerns generally a definite object and it is always formulated, for it is the formula itself that is the prayer. One can have an aspiration and transcribe it in a prayer, but if it is formulated in words, it is almost a movement of invocation.

Aspiration goes beyond prayer on all sides. It is much more self-forgetful, living only in the thing that one wills to do or become, in the offering that one seeks to make to the Divine. Aspiration may come from any plane, but the centre lies in the psychic.

(3)

You aspire for a certain state of being. You have, for example, discovered within you something which does not agree with your ideal, a movement of obscurity or ignorance, even perhaps a bad will, something which goes against what you want to realise. You do not formulate a vow in words but something rises up in you like a flame, an offering made of a living experience which asks for a greater, larger being, a being more and more clear and precise. The thing can be reproduced in words later on, when one tries to remember and note down the experience.

Aspiration bursts forth like a mounting flame bearing in itself the thing that one desires to become, to do or to have. I said "desires", but "aspires" is the right word, for it has neither the quality nor the form of a desire. It is truly a great flame of purifying will and it bears in its core what seeks to realise itself.

(4)

You have, for example, done a thing which you regret to have done. That has unfortunate consequences and upsets things, involving also other persons. You do not know the reaction of others, but as for yourself you wish that what has been done should turn to good and if a fault has been committed it should be admitted and made an occasion for a greater progress, a greater discipline and a new ascent towards the Divine, for opening a door towards a future that you want to be clearer, more true and more intense.

Then, the thing gathers like a force and rushes forth, mounts like a great ascending movement, sometimes without being formulated in the least, without words, without expression, but like a flame.

That is true aspiration. That can happen a hundred times, a thousand times every day, if you are in the state when you want to progress constantly, become more true, more integrally in harmony with what the Divine will wants of you.

(5)

It seems difficult to pray without praying to someone. There are people who have a conception of the universe from which they have driven out all notion of the Divine. There are many, I suppose, like that. It troubles them, the idea that there is something that knows all, capable of all, and is superior to them in such a formidable manner that there is no comparison; it is troublesome to their self-love, so they try to make a world without the Divine. They certainly cannot pray. To whom would they pray—unless they pray to themselves, which is not the normal custom? But one can aspire for something without having a faith in the Divine. One can have an aspiration for a condition, a knowledge, a realisation, a state of consciousness. You do aspire for something. There are people who have no faith in the existence of God, but they have faith in progress; they believe

that the world is progressing constantly and this progress will go on indefinitely without stop towards a *better* that will be always greater than the preceding *better*. Such people may indeed have a great aspiration. they need have no notion of a divine existence for that.

Aspiration necessarily includes a faith, but it need not be a faith in the divine Being. Prayer, on the other hand, cannot exist unless it is addressed to a divine Being.

(6)

What to pray unless one prays some person for something. You pray someone who can listen to you. If there is none to listen to you, how can you pray? Therefore, if you pray, it means, even in case you do not admit it, you have a faith in something which is infinitely greater and infinitely more powerful than you and which can change your destiny and change yourself, provided you pray in a way that the prayer is heard.

The intellectuals recognise aspiration and say that prayer is an inferior thing. The mystics tell you that aspiration is all right, but if you wish to be heard and wish the Divine to hear, you must pray—and pray with the simplicity of a child, with a perfect candour, that is to say, perfect trust. "I have need of this or that"—whether a moral or material need—"I ask it of you—give me."

"You gave me what I asked for. You have brought to my close touch experiences that were unknown and that are now wonders which I reach at will. I am infinitely grateful and I offer you this hymn of thanksgiving for your intervention."

(7)

Instead of lighting a lamp and kneeling before it with folded hands, light a flame within your heart and then have a great aspiration towards something more beautiful, more true, more noble, better than anything you know.

> "I ask that tomorrow all the things that I do not know I may begin to know, all the things that I cannot do, I may begin to do, and every day more and more."

And if you are put in the presence of much misery in the world, if you have friends who are unhappy and relatives who suffer, if you have difficulties or anything whatsoever, ask:

> "May the entire consciousness all together rise to that Perfection which shall manifest! May all this ignorance that has made the world so unhappy change into an enlightened knowledge! May this bad will be illumined and transformed into good will."

And in proportion to what you are able to do, what you are able to understand, you wish with all your heart that it may be like that. It may take the form of a prayer, and you can ask—ask of what or whom? Ask of that which knows, ask of that which is capable, ask of all that is better and stronger than yourself to give the help that it may be so. And how beautiful such prayers would be!

HOW TO LISTEN

I have begun to notice that many among you, perhaps a very large portion, do not listen to what I say. For not unoften you have put questions on a subject on which I talked in detail just a moment before, as if nothing was spoken. The fact is surely this: each one of you is shut up in his own thought, exactly as, I suppose, you do in the class also at school. You repeat to yourself your own lesson, thinking of what is expected of you—provided, of course, you are at all diligent and attentive—and do not listen to what your teacher asks and explains or what the other students answer. You miss in this way three-fourths of the advantage of being not all alone but in a group.

Here the matter is more serious. For I do not give an individual or personal answer, I answer in such a way that all may profit and if, instead of listening, you continue to think what you have in your own head, you lose the opportunity to learn anything.

That is the first point. If you are here, you must first of all, listen and not think of other things. But that is not sufficient, it is only the beginning. For there is a good way and there are many bad ways of listening. I do

not know if any of you likes to hear music. But if you want to hear music, you must make an absolute silence in your head; you should not follow or accept any thought, you should be wholly concentrated, make yourself a kind of screen, noiseless and immobile. That is the only way of hearing and understanding music. If you allow the least movement or waywardness in your thought, the whole value of the music will escape you.

Now, to understand a teaching which is not altogether of a material kind, which implies an opening to things that are within, the necessity of silence is all the more great. But if instead of listening to what is said, you jump about for an idea in order to put another question or if you start arguing about the things said under the specious pretext of understanding better, all you hear would pass like smoke without leaving an effect.

In the same way, when you have an experience, as long as it lasts, do not try to understand what it means; if you do that, it vanishes, or you deform and disfigure it, taking away all its purity. In the same way also if you want a spiritual experience to enter into you, you must have a brain absolutely quiet and immobile, like a mirror which not only reflects but absorbs, allows the ray to enter and penetrate deep within so that out of the profundities of your consciousness it may rise up one day or other in the form of knowledge.

If you come here, come with the intention of listening in silence. What will happen you will recognise later on; the effect of this attitude of silence you will find out in course of time. But in the mean while the only thing to do is to be silent, still, attentive.

25-7-1956

EDUCATION OF GIRLS

The question is about our physical education and, in a general way, the psychological basis of our activities here. These things have, of course, been written about and spoken of by me and by Sri Aurobindo very often, but evidently the idea does not seem to have entered your consciousness.

I do not wish to wage a war against what you feel and do, but I would like you at least to understand why things are done here in the way they are being done instead of letting yourself go thoughtlessly in a retrograde

movement towards all that is done elsewhere, under the plea that it is how your fathers and grandfathers and great grandfathers and all the ancestors, of yourself and of all your friends and relatives did in the past and consider it as the normal and natural way of doing things.

I do not contradict the fact, in the sense that humanity was created by Nature with special intentions and special purposes; it is in order to realise her ends that Nature fashioned her creatures and gave them special habits and functions. Therefore, if you speak of natural things, I cannot say that they are not natural, for it is Nature's way.

But all the same I have told you, I suppose, not once but many times, and Sri Aurobindo also has written, not once but more than once, that we are not here to recommence, perpetuate, continue what is done elsewhere. And we have given a concrete shape to this fact specially in our education. For, I must avow, without giving offence to any one, that they who come here after having lived much and who carry a heavy load of the past upon their back find it difficult to change immediately their attitude and their point of view, but if you take the young ones, who are not spoilt yet—although they too get spoilt too easily—those who are not spoilt too much by usual education, by family ideas, ancestral inclinations, you have just a chance of turning their consciousness to the true path and obtain somewhat tangible and concrete results.

To speak the truth, we have had nothing to complain; for we had absolutely clear proofs that what we wanted to do is quite possible, if one knows how to go about it.

This is then what we say: given similar conditions, same education, identical possibilities, there is no reason to make a categorical, final and imperative distinction between what is called men and women. For us, human beings are the expression of one and the same soul; and if, as I already said in the beginning, Nature has made a differentiation in the expression with a view to satisfying her needs and realising her purposes, but if our needs and our purposes are different and we do not recognise the physical ends as conceived by Nature to be the final and absolute ends, then we can try and develop our consciousness along another line.

Unfortunately we have come to notice one thing. As years pass and small girls grow up, they suddenly begin to remember that they are girls and that they must live and move in a special manner, they must be pleasant, agreeable, pretty etc., etc., So all our efforts seem to go in vain. Naturally, there are exceptions—there are always exceptions to the rule—but even

among these in the background of their consciousness there is this feeling of being not quite like the others, the satisfaction of having done better than the others, the conceit that they stand comparison with the others —the males!

I am told people have been remarking—people naturally not accustomed to our ways—people with their own old-world ideas—and asking why we have the same programme of physical education for both boys and girls, why the girls are not treated in a special way, quite differently from the boys —is it not a gross error even from the physical point of view to level them together? Their crowning argument being, that is the way things are done everywhere else.

I say if that is the way things are done elsewhere, it is no use our repeating the same here. We cannot do it better than they. On the contrary if things are done elsewhere in that way, it is just the reason why we should not do that way. What we want is precisely to bring into the world something which is not there. But if we keep to all the habits of the world, all its preferences and prejudices, all its constructions, how shall we come out of the rut and do something new?

I have told you, my children, I have repeated in all kinds of tone and temper: if you wish truly to benefit by your stay here, try to look at things and understand them with a new eye and a new perception based on something higher, deeper, truer, something which is yet not there, but will be one day. And it is to build up this future that we have taken a special attitude.

I tell you, we have had quite material proofs of the correctness and truth of our position. They do not last, however. What for? Because it is extremely easy to fall back into the ordinary consciousness, but there is nothing more difficult than to hold oneself high all the time on the top rung of the ladder and look at the world from up there.

But we will not obey Nature's orders, even if these orders have behind them thousands and thousands of years of habit. Yet one thing is certain: the argument that Nature puts forward against any change in things that they have been always as they are is not true. Whether she wants it or not things do change and a day will come when people will say, "Ah yes, things were so in those days, but now it is all different!"

You may naturally complain that I am addressing myself only to the girls and that I am telling you all this in the presence of the "other sex" But I include them also in the ridiculousness of the whole thing. For if they did not think in the way they think, if they did not feel in the way they

feel and if they did not behave in the way they behave, long long ago you would have been disgusted with these childish mannerisms of yours.

However, I ask you only to understand and admit this much for some time that we still belong to a period of faith and trust, that things are on the way to change, that we have reached a point of time when things are turning and taking a new direction. I ask of you a little more faith, a little more trust, just letting yourself be guided. Otherwise you lose the advantage of being here. That is all.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

THE KAIVALYA UPANISHAD

OM. Aswalayana to the Lord Parameshthi came and said, "Teach me, Lord, the highest knowledge of Brahman, the secret knowledge ever followed by the saints, how the wise man swiftly putting from him all evil goeth to the Purusha who is higher than the highest." [1]

Commentary

The Lord Parameshthi is Brahma—not the creator Hiranyagarbha, but the soul who in this Kalpa has climbed up to be the instrument of creation, the first in time of the Gods, the Pitamaha or original and general Prajapati; the Pitamaha, because all the fathers or special Prajapatis, Daksha and others, are his mind-born children. The confusion between the grandsire and the Creator, who is also called Brahma, is common; but the distinction is clear. Thus in the Mundaka Upanishad, *brahmā devānām prathamaḥ sambabhūva*, it is the first of Gods, the earliest birth of Time, the father of Atharva, and not the unborn eternal Hiranyagarbha. In the Puranas Brahma is described as in fear of his life from Madhu and Kaitabha, and cannot be the fearless and immortal Hiranyagarbha. Nor would it be possible for Aswalayana to come to Hiranyagarbha and say "Teach me, Lord", for Hiranyagarbha has no form, nor is He approachable nor does He manifest Himself to man as Shiva and Vishnu do. He is millionfold, Protean, intangible, and for that reason He places in each cycle a Brahma or divine Man between Him and the search and worship of men. It is Brahma or divine Man who is called Parameshthi—or the one full of Paramestham, that which is superlative and highest,—Hiranyagarbha. The power of

[1] ॐ। यथाश्वलायनो भगवन्तं परमेष्ठिनमुपसमेत्योवाच। अधीहि भगवन् ब्रह्मविद्यां वरिष्ठां सदा सद्भिः सेव्यमानां निगूढाम्। यथाऽचिरात्सर्वपापमपोह्य परात्परं पुरुषं याति विद्वान् ॥१॥

Hiranyagarbha is in Brahma and creates through him the *nāma* and *rūpa* of things in this cycle.

To Brahma Parameshthi Aswalayana comes as a disciple to Master and says to him, "Lord, teach me the Brahmavidya." He specifies the kind of knowledge he requires. It is *variṣṭhā*, the best or highest, because it goes beyond the triple Brahman to the Purushottama or Most High God; it is secret, because even in the ordinary teaching of Vedanta, Purana and Tantra it is not expressed, it is always followed by the saints, the initiates. The *santaḥ*, or saints are those who are pure of desire and full of knowledge and it is to these that the secret knowledge has been given *sadā*, from the beginning. He makes his meaning yet clearer by stating the substance of the knowledge —*yathā*, how, by what means one by knowledge, *vidvān*, one can swiftly put sin from him and reach Purushottama.

There are three necessary elements of the path to Kaivalya,—first, the starting-point, *vidyā*, right knowledge, implying the escape from ignorance, from non-knowledge and false knowledge; next, the process or means, escape from *sarvapāpam*, all evil, i.e. sin, pain and grief; last, the goal, Purushottama, the Being who is beyond the highest, that is, beyond *turiya*, Turiya being the Highest. By the escape from sin, pain and grief one attains absolute *ānanda*, the last term of existence, we reach that in which *ānanda* exists. What is that? It is not Turiya who is *śivam*, *śāntam*, *advaitam*, *saccidānandam*, but that which is beyond *śivam* and *aśivam*, good and evil, *śāntam* and *kalilam*, calm and chaos, *dvaitam* and *advaitam*, duality and unity. Sat, Chit and Ananda are in their Highest, but He is neither Sat, Chit nor Ananda nor any combination of these. He is All and yet He is *neti*, *neti*. He is One and yet He is many. He is Parabrahman and He is Parameshwara. He is Male and He is Female. He is *Tat* and He is *Sa*. This is the Higher than the Highest. He is the Purusha, the Being in whose image the world and all the Jivas are made, who pervades all and underlies all the workings of Prakriti as its reality and self. It is this Purusha that Aswalayana seeks.

SRI AUROBINDO

VIKRAM AND THE NYMPH

VIKRAM and the Nymph is the second, in order of time, of Kalidasa's three extant dramas. The steady development of the poet's genius is easy to read even for a superficial observer. *Malavica and the King* is a gracious and delicate trifle, full of the sweet and dainty characterisation which Kalidasa loves, almost too curiously admirable in the perfection of its structure and dramatic art but with only a few touches of that nobility of manner which raises his tender and sensuous poetry and makes it divine. In the *Urvasie* he is preening his wings for a mightier flight; the dramatic art is not so flawless, but the characters are far deeper and nobler, the poetry stronger and more original and the admirable lyrical sweetness of the first and fourth acts as well as the exaltation of love and the passion of beauty which throb through the whole play, lift it into a far rarer creative atmosphere. It is a worthy predecessor of the Shakuntala, that most nobly tender, loveliest and most faultless of all romantic plays. Other indications of this development may be observed. The conventional elements of an Indian romantic comedy, the humours of the Brahmin buffoon and the jealousy of ere established wife for the new innamorata occupy the whole picture in the *Malavica*, though they are touched with exquisite skill and transfigured into elements of a gracious and smiling beauty; in the *Urvasie* the space given to them is far more limited and their connection with the main action far less vital; and they are less skilfully handled; finally in the *Shakuntala* we have only vestiges of them,—a perfunctory recognition of their claims to be admitted rather than a willing use of them as good dramatic material. The prologues of the three plays point to a similar conclusion. Introducing the *Malavica* Kalidasa comes forward as a new and unrecognised poet challenging the fame of the great dramatic classics and apprehensive of severe criticism for his audacity, which he anticipates by a defiant challenge. When the *Urvasie* is first represented, his position as a dramatist is more assured; only, the slightest apology is given for displacing the classics in favour of a new play and the indulgence of the audience is requested not

for the poet but for the actors. The prologue of the *Sh*
other hand breathes of the dignified and confident silence o
Master. No apology is needed; none is volunteered.

The prologue of this play contains an apparent
Vikramaditya, Kalidasa's patron, and tradition seems to
assert, connection of a kind between the plot of the drama
some episode in the King's life. At any rate the name of the
obvious compliment to that great ruler and conqueror and one or two
entendres in the play which I have not thought it worthwhile to tra
into English are, it is clear, strokes of delicate flattery pointed to the same
quarter. The majority of European scholars identify this Vikrama with Harsha of Ujjain, the *Grand Monarque* of classical India; indigenous scholarship mostly dissents from this view, and an imaginative mind may well prefer to associate our greatest classical poet with the earlier and more heroic, if also more shadowy, Vikram, who united the Malavas and founded the power of that great nation, the most gifted and artistic of the earlier Hindu peoples. There are no sufficient data to fix Kalidasa's epoch; he was certainly not later than the 6th century after Christ, certainly not earlier than the 1st century before; but a chronological margin of seven hundred years is too wide to encourage dogmatism.

The legend which forms the subject of the plot is one of the older Indian myths; it may have been a sun myth dear to the heart of the late Prof. Max Muller; or it may have meant something very different. The literary critic is only concerned with the changes and developments it has undergone in the hands of Kalidasa; that these are all in the direction of emotional sweetness and artistic beauty, may easily be seen by comparing with the drama a translation of the original story as it appears in the...

SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO

ND THE CULTURAL FOUNDATION OF INDIA*

I THANK the Sri Aurobindo Centre, Banaras, for giving me this opportunity to pay my homage to the Poet-Seer Sri Aurobindo on his 85th birthday synchronizing with the completion of the first decade of our Independence. Sri Aurobindo was born in 1872 memorable also for the birth of the epoch-making periodical, the *Banga Darshan* of Rishi Bankim Chandra, the high priest of "Bande Mataram". When Sri Aurobindo returned to India in 1893, after 14 years' stay in U.K., Bankim was nearing his end, dying in 1894. Sri Aurobindo joined the Gaekwad's service in Baroda and therefrom he published in July, 1894 remarkable essays on Bankim Chandra and other essays on the politics of Modern India. Towards the end of the nineteenth century Sri Aurobindo wrote his *Bhavani Mandir* (inspired by the *Ananda Math* of Bankim) in which the 'patriots' (like the *Santans* or sons of Mother India) started preparing themselves spiritually and physically for the liberation of the Motherland. This booklet was confiscated and destroyed by the Police in the Swadeshi days (1905-1912) and only recently recovered from oblivion, as I saw a copy in New Delhi. Many such writings of Patriot Sri Aurobindo should be hunted up and republished, so that our people may know what a great part he played in the liberation of the mind and body of the nation from foreign rule. His "New Lamps for Old" published in the *Indu Prakash* of Bombay and such other writings give us even today the thrill of wonder. How dynamic and prophetic he was even before 30! As early as 1891, when he passed the I.C.S. Exam. and yet rejected the 'heaven born' service, Sri Aurobindo expressed his deep sympathy with freedom-loving Ireland through his poem on Charles Stewart Parnell. So a daughter of Ireland,

* Gist of the Presidential Address on the occasion of the celebration, under the auspices of the Sri Aurobindo Study Centre, Banares, on the 85th birthday of Sri Aurobindo (15th August, 1956) .

Miss Margaret Noble or Nivedita, the disciple of Swami Vivekananda, met Sri Aurobindo in 1902, and fought side by side for the cause of Indian freedom till her untimely death in 1911. She shared the risk and responsibility of editing the *Karmayogin* and other papers of Revolutionary Bengal, and Nivedita is also reported to have warned Sri Aurobindo against the possibility of a second time arrest and advised to go abroad. In fact he moved out of Bengal to Pondicherry (1910). He was first arrested (1908-'09) and detained as one of the Terrorists of Bengal led by his younger brother Barin Ghosh and his associates. How they were saved (not all) from the gallows—thanks to the grand advocacy of C. R. Das (later Deshabandhu Chittaranjan)—and how he and Lokamanya Tilak transformed the Moderate Congress into a mighty vehicle of Indian Freedom are glorious chapters of our National history. His maternal Grand-father, Rishi Rajnarayan Bose (a friend of Poet Madhusudan Dutt), was the promoter of the *Swadeshi Mela* (1867) and other nationalist organizations. The grand-son was very devoted to him and when he died in 1899, Sri Aurobindo's soul had already begun turning definitely towards Bengal where he came to marry (1901) Mrinalini Devi. His letters to his wife (only a few luckily preserved) bear eloquent testimony to the secret spirit that moved him.

He was barely 30 when he opened the twentieth century with a poem of symbolic import—Perseus the Deliverer—which reminds us of Shelley and his Prometheus Unbound. Like the Irish and the Welsh Bards Sri Aurobindo was inspiring the despondent nation to plunge in the heroic path of Martyrs and how many gave their lives between 1902 and 1912 has yet to be verified and recorded in golden letters in our Nation's Roll of Honour. His brother Barin Ghosh was given transportation for life, although he returned from the Andamans in 1919 as a result of the general amnesty coming with peace at the end of the first World War. Wife Mrinalini was getting ready then to visit Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry when she fell ill and expired at her paternal home in Ranchi, Behar. Sri Aurobindo was cut off from most of his friends and colleagues who were amazed to discover in 1914 from a newly published journal *Arya* that the patriot was already getting metamorphosed into a philosopher. They should have remembered that the psychic transformation had started already in Bengal when he was an undertrial prisoner in Alipore jail, and it was right there that he had his first Revelation or Divine Vision as recorded in his *Kara Kahini* (Prison chronicle) and in his famous Uttarpara Speech. In the prison itself he wrote two of his famous poems: "The Mother of Dreams" and "A

Pilgrim of Eternity" foreshadowing a new Mother cult and a novel Pilgrimage of Rishi Aurobindo. Coming out of prison he began editing the *Karmayogin* (in English) and *Dharma* (in Bengali) precursors of his *Arya* (1914-1921). Sri Aurobindo the seer and philosopher made the profoundest studies of the Gita, the Upanishads, the Vedas and ever so many scriptures of the East and the West. He was not a "truant" politician (as some misjudged him) but the trusted Guide of the nation in the path of true *Swaraj* or self-realization. How he fulfilled this mission we know. We find the Man concretizing the spiritual Seer just as the Seer emerged to fulfil the man. He stopped publishing the *Arya*, plunged into Silence broken only when loyal old friends like Chittaranjan (1923) or Rabindranath (1928) came personally to the Ashram. At the age of 54-55 Sri Aurobindo attained what may be called total Realization or *Siddhi* (November 24, 1926); but he continued down to the last days—approaching 80—to take vital interest in the freedom of India and in the Emancipation of Man in the East and the West. This is attested by his profound messages on our Liberation on the 15th of August, 1947, also on the martyrdom of Mahatmaji (1948) and his message to America (15th August, 1949) on his 77th birthday. Many more will be gradually revealed dating from before his final *nirvana* (1950). The Seer himself has drawn the curtain over many episodes of his earthly life but majestic manifestation of the unearthly breaks in descendent splendour and beacons to us when he whispers with Hamlet: The rest is Silence!

Rishi Aurobindo spent half of his life in retirement at Pondicherry. Forty years of his public life lay far behind and there flowed the Speechless yet eloquent river of Communication for the last twenty-four years (1926-1950). That Communication was at once human and divine, personal and impersonal, mundane and eternal—as it is becoming more and more clear from his writings that are being classified and published. We notice only a few that made their appearance during the last thirty years: The Superman (1922); National Education (1924); The Brain of India (1923); Isha Upanishad (1924); Evolution (1923); Ideals and Progress (1922); Essays on the Gita (1928); Kalidasa (1929); The Yoga and its Objects (1931); Thoughts and Glimpses (1932); The Riddle of this World (1933); The National Value of Art (1936); The Mother (1928); Bankim-Tilak-Dayananda (1940); Bases of Yoga (1936); Views and Reviews (1941); Lights on Yoga (1935); The Life Divine (1939) etc.

These works are given according to dates of the publication. A complete Bibliography of this master writer and a complete edition of his works

are being prepared and published by the Sri Aurobindo International University envisaged by the convention presided over by the late Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjea (1951) at the invitation of the Mother. Privileged to be invited to that function, I spoke spontaneously about "Sri Aurobindo himself the University". If there was any one probing the deepest depths of Eastern and Western culture he was Sri Aurobindo whose fitting memorial will be such an International University. Time will not permit me to develop in detail that plan; but I hope that thinkers and academicians of the East and the West will come forward to help to realize that noble dream in this "crisis of civilization", as warned by Tagore with his last breath (1941). These two great sons of Mother India admired each other profoundly and on the 15th of August, 1947, when Tagore was no more and independence came to India, Sri Aurobindo might have remembered the elder Poet offering his poetic salutation (1907) forty years ago—"Aurobindo! Rabindrer laha namaskar".

I hope many will agree with me that arrangements should soon be made to accommodate in India, the seekers of the East and the West eager to make a comparative study of these two Great Poet-Philosophers of this age who gave their messages not for their country alone but for the entire humanity. Conveniently enough both have left to posterity permanent contributions in the world language, English which lends itself to be translated into the major languages of the world. Tagore started that work with his *Gitanjali*, *Sadhana* and other English writings; and Sri Aurobindo published in English—for over half a century—his poetry and prose—down to *Savitri* the spiritual Epic to which he gave the touches of his magic pen in his last days.

> "...And being's look on being with inmost gaze
> And heart laid bare to heart, without walls of Speech
> And the unanimity of seeing minds
> In myriad forms luminous with the One God!"

The literary output of Poet Aurobindo extends over full half a century. The metaphysical discourses of Seer Aurobindo cover also the vast panorama of human thought synthesized in his *Life Divine*. Leaving these higher altitudes of human evaluation to aspiring mountain-climbers of literature and philosophy, I conclude my humble homage to the Seer by giving a brief survey of the Master's thoughts on a basic subject—the Foundations of Indian Culture. He was provoked to open the survey, as the result of an attack on Indian culture by the British dramatic critic William Archer who

was promptly challenged by a friend of India Sir John Woodroffe in his book "Is India Civilized?". Seer Aurobindo as a patriot took up the challenge and crushed William Archer's thesis with a fling—"an extravagant *jeu d'esprit* or mental jugglery!" Like Catherine Mayo's attack on Mother India when the Simon Commission came, William Archer's malicious attack also was timed when the Secretary of State Montague was trying, towards the end of the first World War—to expand India's Self-Government. That is how we find Sri Aurobindo luckily coming out as the champion not only of India but of the whole Asian Culture. Thus, after the major sequences of the monographs in his Journal the *Arya:* the *Secret of the Veda*, *Essays on the Gita*, the *Renaissance in India*, the *Psychology of Social Development*, the *Ideal of Human Unity*, the *Synthesis of Yoga*, the *Life Divine*, the *Future Poetry* etc.—we find a *Defence of Indian Culture*. This monumental study was later issued (1953) in a book-form but was originally published in the *Arya*, serially between December, 1918 (after the Armistice) and January, 1921 (the year of Gandhiji's Non-cooperation). This is a book which should be in every University and College library as the best introduction to Indian Culture. When Archer, in a flippant mood dogmatized that 'India has no Spirituality'—Sri Aurobindo with supreme wisdom and conviction pointed out in reply to "The Calm and Compassion of Buddha victorious over suffering, the meditation of the Thinker transcending in communion with the Eternal, passed above the seekings of thought into identity with the Supreme light of the Spirit, the rapture of the Saint made one by love in the pure heart with the transcendent and universal Love, the will of the Karmayogin raised above egoistic desire and passion into the impersonality of the divine and universal will, these things on which India has set the highest value and which have been the supreme endeavour of her greatest spirits..."

Then, in a closely reasoned chapter of about one hundred pages Sri Aurobindo silenced the "Rationalistic critic on Indian Culture". Criticism apart, he next gave in 300 pages constructive suggestions regarding the intensive study of Indian Religion and Spirituality, Indian Art, Indian Literature, not forgetting Indian Polity or External Influences and Indian Culture. After forty years we are thrilled to read again his concluding paragraph:—

"The Spirit of the Indian Renaissance will take care of the rest,—that power of the Universal true Spirit which has begun to move in our midst for the 'creation of a new and Greater India'".

With a profound sense of History and objectivity of outlook, Sri Aurobindo affirmed that "when a culture which has fallen into a state of comparative inactivity...is faced with a waking, active, tremendously creative civilisation...it is impelled, by the very instinct of Life, to take over these (new) ideas and forms to annex to enrich itself!"

This prophetic truth, of the mutual enrichment of the East and the West, was reiterated thirty years after, on August 15, 1949 as a 'Message to the West' 'delivered equally as a message to the East':—"East and West have the same human nature, a common human destiny, the same aspiration after a Greater Perfection". The West had its 'sages and mystics' just as the East has had its materialistic tendencies, envisaged in our Artha-sastras and Dharma-sastras, discussed in the chapter on Indian Polity. Then come the categories of Kāma or enjoyment of Life and Art; and finally Moksha or Emancipation to which Sri Aurobindo devoted the biggest chapter "Religion and Spirituality" followed by chapters on "Indian Art" and "Indian Literature".

Thus Sri Aurobindo, the most modern philosopher, was also very orthodox in his formulation of the cultural "disciplines" (in German sense) of Dharma (Law), Artha (Polity), Kāma (Enjoyment) and Moksha (Liberation). Like the ancient Sage Bhishma of the Mahabharata, Sri Aurobindo appears as the Sage of Synthetic Yoga (*karmasu kauśalam*) of a Mahabharata of the Future. So I beg leave to appeal to all, in this holy city of Kashi—mother of Brahmanism, Jainism and Buddhism,—to co-operate with the Great Hindu University and to develop—for the benefit of other universities—the syllabus of an Indian and Oriental Culture in the organic context of Western civilisation. There Sri Aurobindo will ever shine as a significant symbol and fulfilment.

A great Eastern Seer that he was, Sri Aurobindo expressed his deepest thoughts in the major western language, English, so easy to be translated in diverse tongues. So, Sri Aurobindo Chairs of Comparative Literature and Philosophy should be created in the major universities of North and South India. How revealing and fruitful should be such a comparative study is shown by Prof. S. K. Maitra in his profound study on "Sri Aurobindo and Bergson". The fruitful field of comparative literature, embracing the living (not classical) languages of India, was pointed out by Sri Aurobindo championing the cause of "popular culture"—sanctified by Tulsidas of Kashi for example:

"The Ramayana of Tulsidas, the songs of Ramprasad and of the Bauls, the wandering Vaishnava devotees, the poetry of Ramdas and Tukaram, the sentences of Tiruvalluvar and the poetess Avvai and the inspired lyrics of the Southern saints and Alwars were known to all classes and their thoughts and their emotions entered deeply into the life of the people."

The above proves beyond doubt that Sri Aurobindo dreamed of a truly People's University attending not only to the lofty superstructures but the undying grass-roots of our culture. Here the literates and the learned share the common heritage of culture with the illiterates and the uneducated, no less eager for Light and Life Divine. India of Sri Aurobindo may yet evolve a new type of Ashram University as already attempted by Rabindranath, Dayananda and Gandhiji. Western academicians may study with profit these new cultural experiments of India and give a new "orientation" to their Natural, Mental and Moral Sciences.

For progressive West—as we find today—has brought us to the verge of a precipice, facing co-destruction by the ruthless nuclear weapons. We are super-specialists in *maraṇāstra* or weapons of Death. But what of Life and its prolongation? These all depend on the capacity of Man to ascend to the Divine and that technique has nowhere been better explained than in the Seer's *magnum opus*, *The Life Divine*. How many years of meditation or *tapasyā* were behind that creation!What supernal height of spiritual, supramental, realization have been revealed by the Master! The gratitude of entire India in this crisis is due to Sri Aurobindo who worked in Silence for forty years, while we were fighting for our political freedom; and the Master pointed to the larger vistas of moral and spiritual freedom unsuspected even by our leading scientists and philosophers!

India of Sri Aurobindo may, as we hope, now be called not only to offer diplomatic and material co-operation but also spiritual collaboration in the cause of Co-existence and World Peace. The Master saw the light of the day in the grand epoch of Indian Renaissance and witnessed also the Independence of India on his 75th birthday (15th August 1947). So may we hope that India and the World will enter a new age of Peace and Harmony when the Centenary (1972) of his birth will be celebrated. Who knows the Poet-Seer may be whispering in the corridors of History, the ineffable message of his poem *Savitri*:

> "Into a wonderful bodiless realm he came
> The home of a passion without name or voice

An hour Eternal in the heart of Time.
The silent soul of all the world was there:
A Being lived, a Presence and a Power
A single Person who was himself and all
And cherished Nature's sweet and dangerous throbs
Transfigured into beats divine and pure"...
"An inner happiness abode in all,
A sense of universal harmonies
A measureless secure Eternity
Of the Truth and Beauty and Good and Joy made One."

KALIDAS NAG

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE UPANISHADS

The Taittiriya Upanishad

III

(Continued from the last issue)

SUCH are the gradations of the Reality in manifestation. Brahman, the Eternal, presents Himself on these several tiers of His Becoming. It is possible to realise Brahman on any of these levels of one's being. It is also possible to realise Him successively on all these planes and embrace Brahman in the full glory of His manifestation. Yet another realisation is also possible. Behind and basing this aspect of the Reality which we may conveniently call the Active Brahman, there is another—the Static Brahman, the Silent, the Immutable. When one seeks this Brahman, He is experienced as the Immobile, Ineffable and beyond all manifestation. The human mind when it approaches this status of Brahman is overpowered by its sense of Silence and Immutability and a strong, almost compelling sense of the unreality of everything else seizes upon it; it comes to take non-manifestation, non-existence as the ultimate Truth. The individual begins to look upon the world as unreal, or at best as something inferior to the Immutable and Ineffable Brahman and all his effort is turned to a gradual withdrawal from this lesser truth of life activity to the pure white heights of the Silence Beyond. Thus it is that

If one knows Him as Brahman the Non-Being, he becomes merely the non-existent.[1]

But as we have seen, that is only one side of the truth. The Truth of Non-Being is not the whole of Brahman. Brahman is equally and more patently the Absolute Being, Absolute Consciousness and Absolute Bliss.

[1] असन्नेव स भवति। असद् ब्रह्मेति वेद चेत्। (II. 6)

He is here manifest as and in the Universe which presses upon our conscious ness at every moment in a thousand ways, constantly asserting the reality of its Being. One who sees and recognises this fact, has perceived the Truth, the real foundation of all existence. And as he realises it and organises his life around this perception, his life begins to acquire a new significance; he becomes a centre of new values, one who radiates and instils something of the positive Truth he is in possession of and all creatures look to him as an exemplar, as a Pillar to hold to amidst the bewildering vicissitudes of the life of Ignorance to which they are subject. Thus declares the Upanishad:

If one knows that Brahman Is, then is he known as the real in existence.[1]

One becomes what he conceives. The aspirant who seeks and strives to become one with the Reality in its status of Becoming, manifests and renders in his own being that Truth of Brahman in the measure of his realisation[2]. Even so, he who approaches It as the Immutable, the Silent, the Inactive, loses his being in that Immutability, Silence and Inactivity—the Nirvana, and cancels himself from the fact of manifestation around.

Be that as it may, be the faith and knowledge of man whatever it is during his life-time, does it make any difference after he dies? Is it not that both he who knows and he who does not know, the wise and the ignorant, are equal in death and both are overtaken by the same fate? The Upanishad takes note of this doubt likely to arise in the common mind. Does the man who has not the knowledge go to the world of Brahman when he passes?

[1] अस्ति ब्रह्मेति चेद्वेद। सन्तमेनं ततो विदुरिति। (II. 6)

[2] "Yoga is in essence the union of the soul with the immortal being and consciousness and delight of the Divine, effected through the human nature with a result of development into the divine nature of being, whatever that may be, so far as we can conceive it in mind and realise it in spiritual activity. Whatever we see of this Divine and fix our concentrated effort upon it, that we can become or grow into some kind of unity with it or at the lowest into tune and harmony with it. The old Upanishad put it trenchantly in its highest terms, 'Whoever envisages it as the Existence becomes that existence and whoever envisages it as the Non-existence, becomes that non-existence;' so too it is with all else that we see of the Divine,—that, we may say, is at once the essential and the pragmatic truth of the Godhead. It is something beyond us which is indeed already within us, but which we as yet are not or are only initially in our human existence; but whatever of it we see, we can create or reveal in our conscious nature and being and can grow into it, and so to create or reveal in ourselves individually the Godhead and grow into its universality and transcendence is our spiritual destiny." (Sri Aurobindo: *On Yoga* p. 670).

or does he fail to do so? Does the man of knowledge, when he sheds the body, go on to taste and share the riches of Brahman the Immortal,—the Knowledge, the Power, the Bliss?

When one who has not the Knowledge, passes over to that other world, do any such travel farther? Or when one who knows, has passed over to the other world, does any such enjoy possession?[1]

Yes, say the seers in emphatic terms; the man who has realised, who has acquired the saving knowledge, goes from felicity to yet greater spiritual felicity. But not so the man who has failed. Though this particular Upanishad does not say it explicitly, there are other texts which declare in unmistakable terms that what one is determines what he shall be hereafter.[2] The world here and the worlds beyond are not separate. All is a connected, seried manifestation of the One Brahman. What is done or happens in one world or on one plane of existence is attended by its inevitable sequence on the other levels. The Upanishad then proceeds to drive home this truth of all existence being the formation of One Reality by describing the emanation of the Universe out of the Being of Brahman.

[1] उताविद्वानमुं लोकं प्रेत्य। कश्चन गच्छती ३। अहो विद्वानमुं लोकं प्रेत्य। कश्चित् समश्नुता ३५। (II. 6)

[2] इह चेदशकद्बोद्धुं प्राक् शरीरस्य विस्रसः। ततः सर्गेषु लोकेषु शरीरत्वाय कल्पते।

If in this world of men and before thy body fall from thee, thou wert able to apprehend it, then thou availeth for embodiment in the worlds that He creates. (Katha Up. VI. 4)

अनुसंयन्ति यथाकर्म यथाश्रुतम्।

According to their deeds is their goal and after the measure of their revealed knowledge. (Katha Up. V. 7).

इह चेदवेदीदथ सत्यमस्ति न चेदिहावेदीन्महती विनष्टिः।

If here one comes to that knowledge, then one truly is; if here one comes not to the knowledge, then great is the perdition. (Kena Up. II. 4).

इहैव सन्तोऽथ विद्मस्तद्वयं न चेदवेदीर्महती विनष्टिः। ये तद्विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्त्येतरे दुःखमेवापियन्ति।

Verily, while we are here we may know this. If you have known it not, great is the destruction. Those who know this become immortal. But others go only to sorrow. (Brihadaranyaka Up. IV. 4. 14).

कर्मानुगान्यनुक्रमेण देही स्थानेषु रुपाण्यभिसम्पद्यते।.... क्रियागुणैरात्मगुणैश्च तेषां संयोगहेतुः

According unto his deeds the embodied one successfully assumes forms in various conditions... (each) subsequent cause of his union with them is seen to be because of the quality of his acts and of himself. (Svetasvatara Up. V. 11-12.).

It is out of Brahman, the Supreme Reality, that the All has issued. Why did it issue forth? Why did the Spirit, the One Brahman put out the Many? It is because of its own urge for a varied play of its self-delight. Blissful in its soleness of being, the Spirit would have Delight in a manifoldness of expression. "The self-delight of Brahman is not limited, however, by the still and motionless possession of its absolute self-being. Just as its force of consciousness is capable of throwing itself into forms infinitely and with an endless variation, so also its self-delight is capable of movement, of variation, of revelling in that infinite flux and mutability of itself represented by numberless teeming universes. To loose forth and enjoy this infinite movement and variation of its self-delight is the object of its extensive or creative play of Force." (Sri Aurobindo)[1]

The Spirit desired of old "I would be manifold for the birth of peoples."[2]

And what was the means of his manifold begetting?

"Indeed, it is understood that the physical life is not the sole life and that the human soul does not end with its end, but continues its existence in another state of consciousness, in another plane of being corresponding to the condition and level of being it has risen to in the terrestrial existence. If man is to survive the physical death with a spiritual status, he has to establish in himself in the period of his bodily life on earth, points of contact with the higher powers of the Spirit, must have awakened and opened in him the subtle psychic and spiritual centres of knowledge and will communicating with the higher planes of being in other fields of Consciousness, in the supraphysical and still subtler and higher worlds that are the constituents of this Cosmos. For, thus and not otherwise, when the hour comes for the material body to fall or when the physical life has no further use for the Spirit, he can switch on to the light of his highest level, betake himself to the escalator of the Yoga Force that gives him the lift to those regions of the Spirit with which he has already familiarised himself in a way under conditions obtaining in embodied life on earth. This is a general law that holds good even in the case of one who has chosen—rather who is chosen for—the way of dissolution or absorption, *laya*, in the Being or a return to the Beyond that is absolved from all relations and conditions of being anywhere in the created existence. For the question of the states of the soul and survival does not arise at all in the case of one to whom realisation of Brahman is the absorption where he is, in the Absolute, and the very thought of this world or the next is out of question. But the man in whom the fire is not kindled for a life of the Spirt, gropes in the dark after death, revelling in things he ran after in embodied life; but only he who is able *to know* before the fall of the body is competent for a subtle and spiritual embodiment in other worlds." (Sri Kapali Sastry: *Lights on the Upanishads*. P. 45-46)

[1] *The Life Divine* (Vol. I, Chapter 11)

[2] सोऽकामयत। बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति। (II. 6)

This is the same Desire *Kāma* that is spoken of by the Seers of the Rig Veda:

कामस्तदग्रे समवर्तत That moved at first as desire within. (Rv. X. 129.4)

He concentrated all Himself in thought, and by the force of His brooding He created all this universe, yea, all whatsoever exists.[1]

Tapas-taptvā, by doing tapas. Tapas is the ingathering of all of one's consciousness and concentrating its force upon the object in view; as a result of this heat of creative incubation there is a release of energy, a dynamis which goes to effectuate the purpose undertaken.[2] Now, the Upanishad declares, Brahman concentrated his consciousness-force to effect a manifold manifestation out of his Being and the Universe was the result. It is not to be thought that having produced, He left it to itself. Creating the Universe, He made a dwelling of it and expressed himself there variously.

Now when He had brought it forth, He entered into that He had created, He entering became the Is here and the May Be there.[3] *He became that which is defined and that which has no feature; He became this housed thing and that houseless; He became Knowledge and He became Ignorance; He became Truth and He became falsehood. Yea, He became all truth, even whatsoever here exists.*[3]

He became all that is here. But in that process He did not cease to be the Beyond. He is both what He ever was and will be, the *Beyond*, and the Here, what He has become. He is all that is in creation; not merely in what is conceived to be the inherent aspects of Brahman e.g. the Infinity, the Knowledge, the Good, but also in what appears to be their opposites. For Brahman being the One and the only one Reality, there could be no

[1] स तपोऽतप्यत। स तप्स्तत्वा। इदं सर्वमसृजत। यदिदं किंच। (II. 6)

[2] "Tapas means literally heat, afterwards any kind of energism, askesis, austerity of conscious force acting upon itself or its object. The world was created by Tapas in the form, says the ancient image, of an egg, which being broken, again by Tapas, heat of incubation of conscious force, the Purusha emerged, Soul in Nature, like a bird from the egg. It may be observed that the usual translation of the word *tapasya* in English books, 'penance' is quite misleading—the idea of penance entered rarely into the austerities practised by Indian ascetics. Nor was mortification of the body the essence even of the most severe and self-afflicting austerities; the aim was rather an overpassing of the hold of the bodily nature on the consciousness or else a supernormal energising of the consciousness and will to gain some spiritual or other object." (Sri Aurobindo: *The Life Divine*, Vol. II. Chap. 12)

[3] Or, He became the existent and the beyond-existence;

तत् सृष्टवा तदेवानुप्राविशत्। तदनुप्रविश्य। सच्च त्यच्चाभवत्। निरुक्तं चानिरुक्तम् च। निलयनं चानिलयनं च। विज्ञानं चाविज्ञानं च। सत्यं चानृतंच सत्यमभवत्। यदिदं किंच। (II. 6)

other which has taken these forms and no form could be born or exist outside of it. He is both the determinate and the indeterminate; the form as well as the formless; knowledge and the absence of knowledge-Ignorance; Truth and its opposite, Falsehood.

All that exists, says the Upanishad, is He. He is the All and the All is He.[1]

Therefore they say of Him that He is truth.[2]

The Universe, then, is born *of* and *in* the Absolute Brahman.

In the beginning all this was Non-being. It was thence that Being was born.[3]

[1] The Vedantic seers, it may be noted, make no attempt to explain away the existence of Ignorance and its sequel, suffering and evil, by divesting God of all responsibility either by positing the principle of an Illusive Power, Maya, or a manichean Duality. They are unequivocal on the point. God is all that exists. "Sachchidananda of the Vedanta is one existence without a second; all that is, is He. If then evil and suffering exist, it is He that bears the evil and suffering in the creature in whom He has embodied Himself." (Sri Aurobindo: *The Life Divine* Vol. I. Chap. 11)"To put away the responsibility for all that seems to us evil or terrible on the shoulders of a semi-omnipotent Devil, or to put it aside as part of Nature, making an unbridgeable opposition between world-nature and God-nature, as if Nature were independent of God, or throw the responsibility on man and his sins, as if he had a preponderant voice in the making of this world or could create anything against the will of God, are clumsily comfortable devices in which the religious thought of India has never taken refuge. We have to look courageously in the face of the reality and see that it is God and none else who has made this world in his being and that so he has made it. We have to see that Nature devouring her children, Time eating up the lives of creatures, Death universal and ineluctable and the violence of the Rudra forces in man and Nature are also the supreme Godhead in one of his figures. We have to see that God the bountiful and prodigal creator, God the helpful, strong and benignant preserver is also God the devourer and destroyer. The torment of the couch of pain and evil on which we are racked is his touch as much as happiness and sweetness and pleasure. It is only when we with the eye of the complete union can feel this truth in the depths of our being that we can entirely discover behind that mask too the calm and beautiful face of the blissful Godhead and in this touch that tests our imperfection the touch of the friend and builder of the spirit in man. The discords of the worlds are God's discords and it is only by accepting and proceeding through them that we can arrive at the greater concords of his supreme harmony, the summits and thrilled vastnesses of his transcendent and his cosmic Ananda." (Sri Aurobindo: *Essays on the Gita.*) How came it to be that in this Creation of Brahman who is Sat-Chit-Ananda, Infinite Existence, Consciousness and Bliss, there is found such a dominant strain of Ignorance and Evil, is a large question that has been dealt with at length by Sri Aurobindo in the pages of the *Life Divine.*

[2] तत्सत्यमित्याचक्षते । (II. 6)

[3] असद् वा इदमग्र आसीत् । ततो वै सदजायत । (II. 7)

Before all this Existence came to be, says the Upanishad, there was only a Non-existence. And Non-existence, we must note, does not mean a Nothing or a Nil or a Nihil. For as the Chhandogya asks, how can anything arise out of nothing?[1] It can only mean a primal state, an Un-manifest, to which none of the terms of manifest existence can apply. It is something beyond all our conceptions of Being; and to emphasise this transcendence of categories of phenomenal existence it is called *non*-Being or *non*-existence. Sri Aurobindo points out:

"Non-Being is only a word. When we examine the fact it represents, we can no longer be sure that absolute non-existence has any better chance than the infinite Self of being more than an ideative formation of the mind. We really mean by this Nothing something beyond the last term to which we can reduce our purest conception and our most abstract or subtle experience of actual being as we know or conceive it while in this universe. This Nothing then is merely a something beyond positive conception. We erect a fiction of nothingness in order to overpass, by the method of total exclusion, all that we can know and consciously are. Actually when we examine closely the Nihil of certain philosophies, we begin to perceive that it is a zero which is All or an indefinable Infinite which appears to the mind a blank, because mind grasps only finite constructions, but is in fact the only true existence." And he observes, further: "Another Upanishad rejects the birth of being out of Non-Being as an impossibility; Being, it says, can only be born from Being. But if we take Non-Being in the sense, not of an inexistent Nihil but of an *X* which exceeds our idea or experience of existence,—a sense applicable to the Absolute Brahman of the Adwaita as well as the Void or Zero of the Buddhists, the impossibility disappears, for That may very well be the source of being, whether by a conceptual or formative Maya or a manifestation or creation out of itself."[2]

Itself created itself; none other created it.[3]

For the simple reason that there was no other than Itself.[4] Even the Tapas, the concentrated consciousness-power, the Shakti which was spoken of

[1] कथं असतः सत् जायेत। ((VI. 2. 2)

[2] *The Life Divine* (Vol. I Chap. 4)

[3] तदात्मानं स्वयमकुरुत। (II. 7)

[4] तस्माद्धान्यन्न परः किंचनास—there was nothing else nor aught beyond it. (Rig Veda X.129.2)

earlier as the efficient agency of manifestation is only a self-nature of Brahman. Thus is the universe Brahman-created *par excellence.*

Therefore they say of it the well and beautifully made.[1]

It is shaped out of the Being of Brahman—the Sat-Chit-Ananda—and naturally carries the characteristic nature of that which forms its substance. It is Brahman as Ananda that plunges into manifestation and it is this Ananda that goes to form the base and essence of all that is projected into this existence.

Lo, this that is well and beautifully made, verily, it is no other than the delight behind existence.[2]

At the root of all creation is Bliss. "The self of things is an infinite indivisible existence; of that existence the essential nature or power is an infinite imperishable force of self-conscious being; and of that self-consciousness the essential nature or knowledge of itself is, again, an infinite inalienable delight of being. In formlessness and in all forms, in the eternal awareness of infinite and indivisible being as in the multiform appearances of finite division this self-existence preserves perpetually its self-delight. As in the apparent inconscience of Matter our soul, growing out of its bondage to its own superficial habit and particular mode of self-conscious existence, discovers that infinite Conscious Force constant, immobile, brooding, so in the apparent non-sensation of Matter it comes to discover and attune itself to an infinite conscious Delight imperturbable, ecstatic, all-embracing. This delight is its own delight, this self is its own self in all; but to our ordinary view of self and things which awakes and moves only upon surfaces, it remains hidden, profound, subconscious. And as it is within all forms, so it is within all experiences whether pleasant, painful or neutral. There too hidden, profound, subconscious, it is that which enables and compels things to remain in existence. It is the reason of that clinging to existence, that overmastering will-to-be, translated vitally as the instinct or self-preservation, physically as the imperishability of matter, mentally as the sense of immortality which attends the formed existence through all its phases of self-development and of which even the occasional impulse of self-destruction is only a reverse form, an attraction to other state of being and a consequent recoil from present state of being. Delight

[1] तस्मात् तत्सुकृतमुच्यते। (II. 7)
[2] यद्वै तत्सुकृतम्। रसो वै सः (II. 7)

is existence, Delight is the secret of creation, Delight is the root of birth, Delight is the cause of remaining in existence, Delight is the end of birth and that in which creation ceases. 'From Ananda' says the Upanishad 'all existences are born, by Ananda they remain in being and increase, to Ananda they depart." (Sri Aurobindo)[1]

The Supreme manifests Himself in an utter overflooding of His Ananda for a diverse play of his potentialities; it is again this Ananda that supports as its bedrock all manifestation of which the evolutionary movement in which we are involved is a significant part. Life forms, persists and grows in spite of all the factors contrary to its blossoming because of this principle of Ananda which feeds and sustains it from within:

For who could labour to draw in the breath or who could have strength to breathe it out, if there were not that Bliss in the heaven of his heart, the ether within his being?[2]

And the Goal towards which the entire creation moves is a full and conscious partaking of this Delight by each individual in union with the One and the All here in terrestrial life. This is the true character of creation

[1] *The Life Divine* Vol I. Chap. 12.

[2] को ह्येवान्यात् कः प्राण्यात्। यदेष आकाश आनन्दो न स्यात्।

"A transcendent Bliss, unimaginable and inexpressible by the mind and speech, is the nature of the Ineffable. That broods immanent and secret in the whole universe and in everything in the universe. Its presence is described as a secret ether of the bliss of being, of which the Scripture says that, if this were not, none could for a moment breathe or live. And this spiritual bliss is here also in our hearts. It is hidden in from the toil of the surface mind which catches only at weak and flawed translations of it into various mental, vital and physical forms of the joy of existence. But if the mind has once grown sufficiently subtle and pure in its receptions and not limited by the grosser nature of our outward responses to existence, we can take a reflection of it which will wear perhaps wholly or predominantly the hue of whatever is strongest in our nature." (Sri Aurobindo: *On Yoga* P. 677)

Vide also:

A secret air of pure felicity
Deep like a sapphire heaven our spirits breathe;
Or hearts and bodies feel its obscure call,
Our senses grope for it and touch and lose.
If this withdrew, the world would sink in the Void;
If this were not, nothing could move or live.
A hidden bliss is at the root of things.
A mute Delight regards Time's countless works:
To house God's joy in things Space gave wide room,
To house God's joy in self our souls were born.

(*Savitri*: Book X. Canto 3)

and the life therein. It is due to Ignorance and its vitiating sequel that this truth is veiled from us. And in proportion as we overpass this limiting Ignorance and grow into the wider Knowledge which opens to us the gates of the Ananda coursing behind our surfaces, we begin to perceive and experience the creation as a product of Delight.

When he has got him this Delight, then it is that this creation becomes a thing of bliss.[1]

"Such then is the view of the universe which arises out of the integral Vedantic affirmation. An infinite, indivisible existence all-blissful in its pure self-consciousness moves out of its fundamental purity into a varied play of Force that is consciousness, into the movement of Prakriti which is the play of Maya. The delight of its existence is at first self-gathered, absorbed, subconscious in the basis of the physical universe; then emergent in a great mass of neutral movement which is not yet what we call sensation; then further emergent with the growth of mind and ego in the triple vibration of pain, pleasure and indifference originating from the limitation of the force of consciousness in the form and from its exposure to shocks of the universal Force which it finds alien to it and out of harmony with its own measure and standard; finally, the conscious emergence of the full Sachchidananda in its creations by universality, by equality, by self-possession and conquest of Nature. This is the course and movement of the world." (Sri Aurobindo)[2]

When one realises in one's own being this fact of Bliss as the true character of all life, when one identifies himself with Brahman as Ananda, he embraces all as so many currents of the one Sea of Brahmananda. He feels one with his fellow creatures. There is no effective sense of 'others' in his consciousness, with the result that the actions and reactions which are normal in the interchange between men and men and separate selves lose their edge here. One no more needs to protect himself from the invasive movement which comes from another; he has no more fear that the 'other' will harm and devour him. For fear comes only when there is the other, *dvitiyād vai bhayam bhavati.*[3] In his self-awareness, his neighbour is not the other, but only another centre in his own expanded being which is one with the Universal Self.

[1] रसं ह्येवायं लब्ध्वानन्दी भवति। (II. 7)

[2] *The Life Divine* (Vol. I, Chap. 12)

[3] Brihadaranyaka Up. I.4.2.

It is He that is the fountain of bliss; for when the Spirit that is within us finds the Invisible Bodiless Undefinable and Unhoused Eternal his refuge and firm foundation, then he has passed beyond the reach of Fear.[1]

But, warns the Upanishad, for one who fails to unify himself completely with this Eternal, the Brahman, for one who in his imperfect knowledge maintains a distinction—however small and in whatever form—between himself and the One, there is still room for fear. Separativity in consciousness, however slender, creates a gulf between him and others, between him and the One who is the source of All. The One Himself in his immensity of Consciousness and Power has an overpowering effect on the limited and self-limiting individuality.

But when the Spirit that is within us makes for himself even a little difference in the Eternal, then he has fear, yea, the Eternal himself becomes a terror to such a knower who thinks not.[2]

* *

The One not only creates but He also governs. It is the Imperative of this embodied Spirit that is being executed by the Gods who are the cosmic powers and personalities put out by the Godhead to work out His purpose. In the poetic imagery of the Upanishad:

Through the fear of Him the Wind blows;
through the fear of Him the Sun rises;
through the fear of Him Indra and Agni and Death hasten in their courses.[3]

* *

Brahman has been described as the Fountain of Bliss. Sheer Ananda is His nature. It is indeed ineffable; yet, some idea of its vastness and intensity can be rendered to the mind in terms of the joy experienced in normal human life. For even the incomplete and mixed joy and pleasure of the mortal living

[1] एष ह्येवानन्दयाति। यदा ह्येवैष एतस्मिन्नदृश्येऽनात्म्येऽनिरुक्तेऽनिलयनेऽभयं प्रतिष्ठां विन्दते। अथ सोऽभयं गतो भवति। (II. 7)

[2] यदा ह्येवैष एतस्मिन्नुदरमन्तरं कुरुते। अथ तस्य भयं भवति। तत्वेव भयं विदुषोऽमन्वानस्य। (II. 7)

[3] भीषास्माद्वातः पवते। भीषोदेति सूर्यः। भीषास्मादग्निश्चेन्द्रश्च। मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चम इति। (II. 8)

in ignorance, are derived ultimately from this Delight; they are a diminution, though a deformation of the divine Ananda. And this is what the Upanishad now proceeds to do in working out, what has been aptly called a Calculus of Beatitude. Starting with as full a human joy as possible as its unit, the text goes on, step by step, to describe the degrees of Ananda that are attainable on higher and yet higher grades of existence in the scale of evolution as conceived by the ancient Indian spirit.[1]

Let there be a young man, excellent and lovely in his youth, a great student; let him have fair manners, and a most firm heart and great strength of body and let all this wide earth be full of wealth for his enjoying. That is the measure of bliss of one human being.

Now a hundred and a hundredfold of the human measure of bliss, is the one bliss of men that have become angels in heaven.

This is the Bliss of those who, at the close of their earthly life, have become angels in heaven by virtue of their merit. But, the Upanishad adds, this bliss can also be of him (while here on earth) who has imbibed the Knowledge (of the Self) in the Vedas and

whose soul the blight of desire touches not.[2]

The higher Bliss comes naturally to the man who has grown into the liberating Knowledge and who is not subject to the hold of Limitation and its issue—desire and struggle.

A hundred and a hundredfold of this measure of angelic bliss is one bliss of Gods that are angels in heaven.[3]

Again, this too

is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire touches not.

A hundred and a hundredfold of this measure of divine angelic bliss is one bliss of the Fathers[4] *whose world of heaven is their world for ever.*

And this is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire touches not.

[1] The depth and range of the Bliss is proportionate to the knowledge that one attains. As the vistas of Knowledge open wider and wider in the ascension of the soul, so do the seas of Ananda.

[2] श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य। (II. 8)

[3] Not those who have arrived at the status of angels by effort but they who are angels by birth.

[4] The Manes

A hundred and a hundredfold of this measure of bliss of the Fathers whose worlds are for ever, is one bliss of the Gods who are born as Gods in heaven.[1]

And this is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire touches not.

A hundred and a hundredfold of this measure of bliss of the first born in heaven, is one bliss of the Gods of work[2] *who are Gods, for by their strength of their deeds they depart and are Gods in heaven.*

And this is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire touches not.

A hundred and a hundredfold of this measure of bliss of the Gods of work, is one bliss of the great Gods[3] *who are Gods for ever.*

And this is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire touches not.

A hundred and a hundredfold of this measure of divine bliss, is one bliss of Indra[4]*, the King in Heaven.*

And this is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire touches not.

A hundred and a hundredfold of this measure of Indra's bliss is one bliss of Brihaspati,[5] *who taught the Gods in heaven.*

And this is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire touches not.

A hundred and a hundredfold of this measure of Brihaspati's bliss, is one bliss of Prajapati[6]*, the Almighty Father.*

And this is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire touches not.

A hundred and a hundredfold of this measure of Prajapati's bliss, is one bliss of the Eternal Spirit[7].

[1] Gods in their generality
[2] God-Manifestations for specific purposes
[3] of the Overmental heights
[4] Lord of the Heavens of pure mentality
[5] The Master who gives the Word of Knowledge to Indra and the Gods
[6] The Creator
[7] Brahman the Absolute

Max Muller's remarks on this passage are interesting:

"In giving the various degrees of happiness, the author of the Upanishad gives us at the same time the various classes of human and divine beings which we must suppose were recognised in his time. We have Men, human Gandharvas, Fathers, born Gods, Gods by merit, Gods, Indra, Brihaspati, Prajapati, Brahman. Such a list would seem to

And this is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire touches not.

Note the repeated affirmation by the Upanishad that a seeker, while he still remains a human being, can realise in himself each of the states of Beatitude in the higher grades of being provided he strives and equips himself thatwise. This possibility which is ever present before man is not open to the other orders in Creation. They are what Sri Aurobindo calls typal beings who are fixed in the frame of their own perfection. If they want to enlarge themselves and progress beyond their status by acquiring the characteristics natural to other gradations of manifestations, they have to come down and strive on the Earth which is the appointed field of evolution and progress.

And so, it is to this Bliss of Brahman that the man who *knows* arrives. Here is the clear answer of the Upanishad to the questions posed earlier as to what is the state in which the man of knowledge finds himself after death and what of him who hath not the knowledge.

One who realises in himself the truth that his own self and the self of the universe are One, the greater truth that it is the same eternal Spirit who is embodied in himself as well as in the universe, is not extinguished the moment he dies. Withdrawing from the world of physical matter to the subtle and still more subtle levels of existence, in an ordered manner, he finally arrives at the inmost Self that is of Bliss. And by implication it is clear that the man without knowledge fails to reach this consummation.

The Spirit who is here in a man and the Spirit who is there in the Sun, it is one Spirit and there is no other. He who knows this, when he has gone away from this world, passes to this Self which is of food; he passes to this Self which

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be the invention of an individual rather than the result of an old tradition, if it did not occur in a very similar form in the Shatapatha Brahmana, Madhyandina Shakha XIV.7,1,31, Kanva Shakha (Brih. Ar. Up. IV, 3, 32). Here, too, the highest measure of happiness is ascribed to the Brahmaloka, and other beings are supposed to share a certain measure only of its supreme happiness.....

The arrangement of these beings and their worlds, one rising above the other, reminds us of the cosmography of the Buddhists, but the elements, though in a less systematic form, existed evidently before. Thus we find in the so-called Garg Brahmana (Shatapahta Brah-, mana XIC, 6, 6, 1) the following successions: Water, air, ether, the worlds of the sky, heaven sun, moon, stars, gods, Gandharvas, Prajapati, Brahman. In the Kaushitaki Upanishad 1,3 there is another series, the worlds of Agni, Vayu, Varuna, Indra, Prajapati, and Brahman."

is of Prana; he passes to this Self whch is of Mind; he passes to this Self which is of Knowledge; he passes to this Self which is of Bliss.[1]

* *

A comparative scale of the various grades of Ananda, in the order of evolutionary ascension, leading up to the Bliss of Brahman was presented in the foregoing section. But that was only to bring home to the enquiring mind something of the vastness and intensity of the supreme Ananda. But truly, says the Upanishad, this Bliss of Brahman is ineffable. Like the highest, the utter Brahman, His self-nature too is unseizable by terms of thought or speech. The scope of the faculties of mind is too limited by its very constitution to grasp and the expressive power of human speech too narrow in its range to describe the nature of this Bliss ineffable. As they approach near to it, they lose their functioning and tend to dissolve:

The Bliss of the Eternal from which words turn back without attaining; and mind also returns baffled.[2]

He who has realised his oneness with Brahman, and thus knows by identity of his being the Bliss of Brahman, has no fear from anywhere because to him all is one Bliss; there is no break in his extension which creates the 'other' giving room for fear.

He fears not for aught in this world or elsewhere.[3]

He has risen above the dualities of pleasure and pain, good and evil. Good and Evil are values that are pertinent as long as one's consciousness is in a state of development where they are necessary to educate and process it towards its self-development. Once the individual transcends the belt of Ignorance in which good and evil, right and wrong, are the necessary signposts, they cease to be. To quote Sri Aurobindo, while on the subject:

"In ancient Indian spiritual thought there was a clearer perception... the practice of truth, virtue, right will and right doing was regarded as a necessity of the approach to spiritual realisation, but in the realisation

[1] स यश्चायं पुरुषे। यश्चासावादित्ये। स एकः। स य एवंवित्। अस्माल्लोकात्प्रेत्य। एतमन्नमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रामति। एतं प्राणमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रामति। एतं मनोमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रामति। एतं विज्ञानमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रामति। एतमानन्दमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रामति। (II. 8)

[2] यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते। अप्राप्य मनसा सह। (II. 9)

[3] न बिभेति कुतश्चनेति। (II. 9)

itself the being rises to the greater consciousness of the Infinite and Eternal and shakes away from itself the burden of sin and virtue, for that belongs to the relativity and the Ignorance. Beyond this larger truer perception lay the intuition that a relative good is a training imposed by World-Nature upon us so that we may pass through it towards the true Good which is absolute. These problems are of the mind and the ignorant life, they do not accompany us beyond mind; as there is a cessation of the duality of truth and error in an infinite Truth-Consciousness, so there is a liberation from the duality of good and evil in an infinite Good, there is transcendence."[1]

The knower of the Eternal moves and acts directly from the Base of Brahman-Knowledge, the Eternal Truth, and whatever he does is the Right, whatever he expresses is the Truth. It is the flawless, self-effectuating Truth that acts in him in its undeflected Power.

Verily, to him comes not remorse and her torment saying 'Why have I left undone the good and why have I done that which was evil?' For he who knows the Eternal, knows these and delivers from them his Spirit; yea, he knows both evil and good for what they are and delivers his Spirit, who knows the Eternal.

And this is Upanishad, the secret of the Veda.[2]

(*to continue*)

M. P. PANDIT

[1] *The Life Divine*, Vol. II. Chap. 15.

[2] एतं ह वाव न तपति। किमहं साधु नाकरवम्। किमहं पापमकरवमिति। स य एवं विद्वानेते आत्मानं स्पृणुते। उभे ह्येवैष एते आत्मानं स्पृणुते। य एवं वेद। इत्युपनिषत्॥ (II. 9)

THE MOTHER'S TEACHINGS

(III)

WE have seen what is the actual nature of the integral divine perfection the Mother holds up before the eyes of humanity as its ultimate destiny. The old, exclusive ideals of personal salvation or Nirvana are steadily losing their sway over human consciousness, and an increasing stress is being laid upon unification, harmonisation, synthesis and integration in the domain of spiritual endeavour and achievement, as in every other domain of life. The sublimation of the collective life, the raising of the level of the collective consciousness and the illumination of what Jung calls the collective Unconscious seem to exercise more and more the active thought of the spiritual seekers. A mere, mechanical pursuit of the traditional, or a slavish repetition of the past no longer satisfies the spirit of the modern man. He wants to go forward, explore virgin fields, hew out new paths of experience, and forge a great and glorious future out of the achievements of the past and the possibilities of the present. He is haunted by dreams of unprecedented conquests, of radical and signal victories, of converting the jangling discords of his life into the happy harmony of a divine existence on earth. He yearns after an orchestrated perfection in himself and in the world in which he lives. Sunk into the lowest abyss, he longs to climb to the highest summits, "eternal-sunned".

But how can his dreams be realised? Has not science failed him and dashed the high hopes it had raised in him? Has not modern philosophy, playing second fiddle to science, proved its incapacity to show him a way out of the dark abyss? Has not his culture become a bog and his civilisation a veritable nightmare? What is it, then, that can save him now from an impending, ignominious ruin?

Some of the most eminent thinkers of the day have turned their attention to religion and regard it as the only lever of ascent. But how can religion, which failed in the past to solve the central problem of human life, fare any better in the present? Mankind has since moved far away in

many directions. Its life has become more expansive and complex, and its interests more varied; its nature has developed many new trends, its collective consciousness, though convulsed and chaotic, is yet instinct with rare aspirations. Religion, as it has come down to us from the past, is palpably powerless to lead mankind to its goal. It is too narrow to contain and coordinate such teeming elements, too fossilised and effete, too much incrusted with mummery and superstition, or too much preoccupied with other-worldly ends to be able to supply the kindling spark, impart the vitalising breath and light up the age-old obscurities of the material life. And yet, buried deep within its piled-up accretions, there is a ray of light which, released and nourished, may grow into an all-encompassing glory, illumine the consciousness of man and impel him to the conquest of immortality. If religion could be rebaptised, infused with a new life and a new, living light; and if it could be geared to the supreme divine dynamism, it would be, as Jung, Sorokin and Toynbee expect it to be, an invincible force for the regeneration and transfiguration of mankind. A spiritual religion, universal in its scope and applicability, and powerful enough to give birth to a new age, a new race of man, and a new order of life, is, indeed, the supreme need of the moment.

The Mother teaches a way of life which promises to usher in such an age of spiritual culture. Call it religion, spiritual discipline, or yoga, whatever you like, it is essentially a way of life, a science and art of living, diametrically opposed to the modern way, and calculated, if scrupulously followed, to lead the consciousness and nature of man to the highest divine perfection.

What are the basic elements of this way and the preliminary requisites for the realisation of its goal?

ASPIRATION

First comes aspiration, which the Mother explains as follows:

"Aspiration is...like a flame shooting up, and contains within it the very thing it asks for. I say 'asks for', but the movement is not at all that of a desire; it is truly a flame, the flame of purifying will carrying at its centre the very object which it wishes to be realised.... It opens out a door upon your future, which you wish to be clearer, truer, intenser; all that gathers in you like a concentrated force and hurls you up in a movement of

ascension. It needs no expression in words. It is indeed a flame that leaps up. Such is true aspiration."[1]

Distinguishing it from Prayer, she says:

"You may have an aspiration and you can transcribe it into a Prayer, but the aspiration itself exceeds the Prayer. It is something much more intimate, much more self-forgetful, living only in the object it wishes to be or to do, almost identified with it."[2]

Aspiration, according to the Mother, is a leaping flame containing in itself both light and force—a light of inner perception and a force of upward propulsion. It is the seed of all future achievement. The nature of a person's future realisation can be very well foreseen in his aspiration. If his aspiration is only for the peace of the Infinite, he can realise it by a sincere and sustained spiritual endeavour. If his aspiration is for the power of the Infinite, he can likewise attain it. If his aspiration is for the fathomless silence of Nirvana, that too he can realise, like the Buddha, by the intensity and steadfastness of his self-discipline. All this shows that aspiration is the key to one's eventual fulfilment. The higher and wider the aspiration, the more comprehensive and powerful will be the realisation. The nature of the aspiration is, therefore, of the greatest importance in the beginning of the spiritual life. What the Mother insists upon is an aspiration for the realisation of the integral Divine, not only His peace and silence, bliss and beauty or light and knowledge. And a realisation not only in the soul or the deeper parts of the being, but in the whole being. Besides it must be a realisation not only of an inner union and communion with the Divine, but of an active manifestation of Him in material life. This is a point of capital importance in a study of the Mother's teachings. The old-world objects of man's spiritual aspiration have not been neglected, but they have been taken up and transcended in an integral aspiration, which aims at a divinisation of human life in all its aspects, and a dynamic union with the Supreme on earth.

Aspiration can be of various kinds and potencies.[3] There can be an aspiration which is merely mental, a seeking for God or spiritual Light and Peace by the most enlightened part of man's mind. There can be an aspiration

[1] & [2] The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo—Part Seven, by Nolini Kanta Gupta.

[3] "In some the aspiration moves on the mental levels or in the vital field; some have a spiritual aspiration."—The Words of The Mother.

which is vital, a seeking in the parts of life and its volitions; there can similarly be a physical aspiration. There is also the possibility of a mixture of these different aspirations in a single being. They are all good, so far as they go, and all are effective. But, the Mother says, "the core of aspiration is in the psychic being; it is there at its purest, for there is its origin and source." All aspirations of a spiritual nature are, in fact, derived from the psychic; but they take on the distinctive aspect and atmosphere of that part of the being through which they express themselves. The psychic origin of an aspiration is often veiled in the beginning; it is only when the psychic is awake and in front of the nature that its aspiration becomes unmistakable and sovereignly effective.

Let us quote a few lines from the Mother's *Prayers and Meditations* in order to illustrate the nature of a true psychic aspiration, the only one that is indispensable in the Integral Yoga.

"O Lord, how ardently my aspiration rises towards Thee: give us the full consciousness of Thy law, the constant perception of Thy will, so that our decision may be Thy decision and our life may be solely consecrated to Thy service and as perfect an expression as possible of Thy inspiration."

Feb. 17, 1914.

"O Lord, my sole aspiration is to know Thee better and serve Thee better every day....What do the outer circumstances matter? They appear to me everyday more vain and more illusory, and I take less and less interest in what will outwardly happen to us; but I am more and more intensely interested in the only thing which appears to me important: *to know Thee better in order to serve Thee better*. All outer events must converge towards this goal, and towards it alone; and for that all depends upon the attitude we have towards them. To be constantly in search of Thee in everything, to will to manifest Thee better in every circumstance, in this attitude is to be found supreme Peace, perfect serenity, true contentment. In it life blooms, widens, spreads out so magnificently, in such majestic surges that no storm can any more trouble it"

March 12, 1914

"As each morning, my aspiration rises towards Thee, and in the silence of my satisfied heart, I ask that Thy Law of love may be expressed, Thy will manifested. And in advance I give my joyful and serene adhesion to the circumstances which are to translate this law and this will.."

March 21, 1914

"To be immersed at once in Thee and Thy work...To be no longer a limited individual...to become the infinitude of Thy forces manifesting through a point...to be delivered from all trammels and all limitations... to rise above all restricting thought...to act and be beyond the act...to act through and for individuals but see only the oneness, the oneness of Thy Love, Thy Knowledge and Thy Being...O my divine Master, eternal Teacher, Sole Reality, dissolve all the darkness of this aggregate which Thou hast formed for Thy service, Thy manifestation in the world..."

May 4, 1914

"O Lord, my adoration rises ardently towards Thee, all my being is like an aspiration, a flame which is consecrated to Thee."

April 4, 1914

It will have been seen from these quotations that the dominant stress in the aspiration is for service, for the fulfilment of the divine Will, for the Divine's manifestation in earthly life. In one of her Prayers, the Mother puts service even above the rapt experience of the supreme beatitude; for, service, springing out of an integral union with the Divine and absolutely untainted by the desires and preferences of the ego, is the only means of fulfilling the divine Will. And the fulfilment of the divine Will by throwing a bridge between "all the splendours of the divine life and all the obscure and sorrowful ignorance of the material world" is the sole object of the soul's descent into the material life. The traditional half-way house between authentic spiritual experience within and moral or ethical direction of life without must be broken down, and the stream of the highest spiritual Force must come flowing down into every part of the integrated human being and render it spiritually dynamic. The aspiration of the sadhaka of the Integral Yoga must be instinct with this vision and will. He who wants self-extinction in the Brahman or only the thrilled nearness to God's ecstatic Presence in trance is not fit for the Integral Yoga. His aspiration is too narrow for this wide and far-flung path. There must be an all-inclusiveness in the aspiration right from the beginning. Union with the Divine in the midst of all the activities of life, union in the cells of the body, union in the working of the will, union in the feelings and emotions, union in thought and intellection, as well as union in the soul...a constant, living, creative union in all being and nature...this is the goal the aspiration of the sadhaka of the Integral Yoga must aim at.

Associating courage with aspiration, the Mother says:

"...I spoke to you once of courage; I said courage means the taste for adventure, the supreme adventure. This taste for the supreme adventure is Aspiration—aspiration that seizes you wholly and throws you without calculation or reserve, without the possibility of withdrawal, into the great adventure of the discovery of the Divine, the great adventure of meeting the Divine and the still greater adventure of realising the Divine. It means throwing oneself into an unknown venture without looking backward, without asking even for a moment what is going to happen—for if you ask where you are going to fall, you never start, you remain fixed where you are, your both feet firmly rooted on the spot, fearing lest you lose your balance. That is why I call the thing courage. But truly it is aspiration. The two go together. True aspiration is something full of courage." An aspirant must be courageous and fearless, for he has to attempt the impossible—losing all to gain all, facing the greatest of difficulties to win the greatest of victories.

An aspiration which is intense but impatient cannot achieve its object. It must be quiet and peaceful, serene even in its flaming ardours, and proof against all buffets and frustrations. "You must keep your aspiration steady and be patient in your endeavour—and you are sure of the success."[1] Even repeated failures must not be allowed to damp the ardour or shake the strength of the aspiration. A sincere aspiration knows no shipwreck, no eventual defeat; for, as the Mother says, it carries within it, at its very centre, the object it wishes to realise. It is, latent or evolved, in all earthly beings; and if they turn to the light even in the midst of darkness, it is thanks to the aspiration of the psychic in them. Not only all earthly beings, but each part of each being can manifest the aspiration in proportion to its openness to the influence of the psychic in it. "The fundamental seat of aspiration from which it radiates or manifests in one part of the being or another is the psychic centre." But the greatest difficulty that the sadhaka of the Integral Yoga encounters in the realisation of his aspiration usually comes from his physical consciousness and physical being. The body is gross and dull, inert and insensitive to all subtle influence. "When I speak of aspiration in the physical, I mean that the very consciousness in you which hankers after material comfort and well-being should of itself, without being compelled by the higher parts of your nature,

[1] Words of the Mother.

ask exclusively for the Divine's Love."[1] How can the dense physical ask, of itself, exclusively for the Divine's Love? Is it not bound to material objects and material interests? "Usually", says the Mother, "you have to show it the Light by means of your higher parts; surely this has to be done persistently, otherwise the physical would never learn..."[2] "How to show it the truth? Well, just as you bring a light into a dark room. Illumine the darkness of your physical consciousness with the intuition and aspiration of your more refined parts and keep on doing so till it realises how futile and unsatisfactory is its hunger for the low ordinary things and turns spontaneously towards the truth. When it does turn, your whole life will be changed—the experience is unmistakable."[3] What is actually the nature of aspiration the physical feels for the Divine when it is touched by the psychic influence?

"Have you never watched a forest with all its countless trees and plants simply struggling to catch the light—twisting and trying in a hundred possible ways just to be in the sun? That is precisely the feeling of aspiration in the physical—the urge, the movement, the push towards the light. Plants have more of it in their physical being than men. Their whole life is a worship of light."[4]

This aspiration, this worship of Light, must be infused into every part of our being from the psychic centre. The body too must turn to the Divine and His service as spontaneously as it turns now to the sense objects of its desire and liking. But this infusion must be, as the Mother has described it, like bringing a light into a dark room. There is no place for coercion or violence in the Integral Yoga. The principle upon which the Yoga stands is that every part of our being is essentially divine and, therefore, inevitably amenable to the influence of the soul and the Divine. Once the psychic light penetrates and permeates it, it cannot but turn to what it has been unconsciously or subconsciously hankering after through endless time—the infinite beatitude of the Love and Light of the Divine.

Aspiration, once kindled, has to be tended with care and vigilance. It has to be protected from the hostile forces of doubt and disbelief. It has to be protected also from the common modern tendency to frivolity, flippancy, dissipation and complacent mediocrity. It wilts and languishes in an atmosphere of rationalistic scepticism or materialistic obtuseness.

[1], [2], [3], [4] Words of the Mother.

We have to be very careful about onr environmeut, the atmosphere of the persons we associate with, the thoughts that traverse our minds, the feelings and emotions that rise in our hearts, and the impulses that seek satisfaction in our lives. Thus screened from the chill blasts of life, the flame of aspiration mounts higher and higher till it reaches the Sempiternal Fire and brings it down for the transfiguration of earthly life and the inevitable Epiphany in Matter.

RISHABHCHAND

"HUMAN RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS"

(A Unesco-sponsored Discussion)

The Growth of Human Relations at the World Level

THE intention behind the subject proposed by Unesco seems to be a study of the conditions favourable or otherwise to the growth of human relations at the world level. That implies, in the first instance, a recognition of the unity of the world and mankind and a reorientation of all relations between man and man on the basis of such recognition. The world and humanity as objective facts are obviously one, physically, physiologically, psychologically; but a conscious recognition of it does not exist as a dynamic fact in the minds of men. Such recognition and the growth of such recognition in intensity and extensity in human mentality is the presupposition as also the solution of the problem we have before us.

But what is it that divides mankind and prevents the growth of man-to-man relations in the world? Such divisions are manifold. They are of nationality, national habit and ideology, culture, religion, professional interest, personal prejudices, wants and desires. However the same do unite people too. In fact, it is not they that unite or divide. In the last instance it is the psychological fact of the nature of selfhood that determines our relations with others. An egoistic selfhood essentially sets to itself a not-self, which it fears and fights against and from which it seeks to defend itself. The line between the self and the not-self can be drawn as between individual and individual, family and family, nation and nation, culture and culture, or regarding any other fact of our life. In fact we have in our selfhood all these lines together. In our physical wants and desires we are divided from other individuals, in our professional interests from other professions that compete with ours. And likewise in our interests of nationality, culture and religion. These constitute a system of values of our selfhood and they could be arranged in a scale of varying intensities of appeal and influence.

Such a selfhood—a selfhood that must posit an antithesis—is the real difficulty in the growth of right human relations of peace and harmony in the world. We can try to build wider and larger egos instead of the narrower and more limited ones, but an ego is an ego and it will create an antithesis, live in fear and therefore lack peace. Its best unities will be bargains and compromises lacking stability and certainty. Evidently a selfhood of a comprehending type would provide the right basis for a cooperative living in the world. But is such a selfhood possible?

Sri Aurobindo affirms that such a selfhood is not only possible but necessary in the evolutional nature of things. Says he, "Man has created a system of civilisation...too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding and his still more limited spiritual and moral capacity to utilise and manage....A greater whole-being, whole-knowledge, whole-power is needed to weld all into a greater unity of whole-life."[1] Such whole-life is according to him, called for today and that is also the next evolutional step that the growth of human life and consciousness must take. The mental consciousness of man is limited, but there is also a deeper consciousness in man, which is characterised by the quality of wholeness or integrality. This consciousness, which is spiritual in nature, is yet a latent fact and needs a special cultivation, but it must become a manifest quality one day. This fact and quality of consciousness is, when we consider its essential nature, the greatest promise of a real basis for the growth of human relations at the world level. A selfhood built on the mental consciousness is egoistic and antithetical and a selfhood built on this fact of consciousness is integral and non-antithetical. A wider appreciation and realisation of this value of life would, therefore, be the best contribution to the growth of unity and peace in the world.

There is another general fact which must also be considered here What is the essential character of the evolution of life? What is it that life from amoeba to man has progressively achieved and what does it tend to aim at further? If the growth of life is essentially the growth of consciousness and if man points to yet further ranges of growth, then the present consciousness of man, which is antithetical, must grow into an integral one. Then alone man will be able to live out of a conscious and a felt sense of oneness of mankind and world. But since the antithetical consciousness of the ego is the nature of man, we have to take him as such and seek the best

[1] The Life Divine (1940), Vol. II (2), pp. 1160 & 62.

possible measures of unity. However, if we can recognise that an integral consciousness is inherent in the nature of things and that the evolutional trend is in the direction of realising it, then our ideal and goal get clearly indicated to us.

These two considerations, one of a comprehending selfhood and the other of the evolutional trend leading to a conscious unity in mankind, are two most valuable guiding principles for gaining some clarity on the various issues of our subject. Let us first take the issue of culture. If mankind is moving in the direction of a conscious unity, then our ideal must evidently be an integral culture of man. If so, each distinctive culture must be a contributory factor to it. From the point of view of the individual personality of man, each culture is a special cultivation of some particular aspect or aspects of human life. In the growth of the integral personality or the integral experience of personality all these aspects are valuable. Therefore for the integral culture of man, which must become an increasing reality when integrality and wholeness become dynamic ideals, each particular culture will become uniquely valuable. Similarly different religions can be conceived as uniquely contributory to the growth of the integral experience of God and ultimate reality.

If our consideration that man is evolutionally moving to realise a life of conscious and felt unity and oneness be valid, then all international obligations as also human obligations in general would tend to take one form, viz., to help each other in the matter of such growth towards oneness. This help will, of course, be limited by one's capacity to give help and the other person's capacity to receive it. The means can vary, but the purpose of action will be the same. All our different obligations, social, legal, moral and their innumerable forms will then have to be conceived as variations of the one basic evolutionally determined obligation between man and man. This is a great simplification and if it truly represents our basic relation then it can be a great guidance for the promotion of human relations at the world level.

The concept of 'equality' as among the nations and peoples of the world is usually found to be a perplexing one. But for the viewpoint we are representing it need not cause much difficulty. All nations and peoples are equal in as much as they share in a common humanity and its possibilities of growth and development. The human consciousness as an evolutionary fact is one quality clearly marked off from the subhuman.

If the proper identity of the human level is recognised and its integrality appreciated, then it will be easy enough to admit that the human consciousness will progress in its evolutionary march best when it progresses as a whole. The progress of one part is in itself a pull on the rest to move forward and the backward condition of any part is a reverse pressure on the rest. And a relatively better condition of the whole will enable any part to go farther than before.

Nations and peoples, as integral parts of humanity, will evidently deserve equality of consideration in the matter of their growth and development. The differences in treatment will be determined by conditions governing preparedness to receive and avail of help and the ability to give help.

The question of "neighbourliness" too cannot present to us much difficulty. Affinities in the levels and qualities of growth among nations will be the true basis of neighbourliness, calling for intimate collaboration in the universal duty of seeking progressive growth for all mankind. However physical neighbourliness and regional proximity will present their own sufficient common grounds for collaboration. But this collaboration will evidently be for wider cooperation with the world and not for exclusive strength.

The relation of the individual to society is also an issue which we must seek to clarify. A careful and a proper consideration of the evolutionary process seems to suggest three terms for its full philosophical characterisation. They are the individual, the universal and the transcendent. The individual is a representative of the universal and exists in it. The universal expresses itself through the individual and does not seem to exist apart from it. And they both in the evolutionary march progressively realise what transcends them at the moment. Without the transcendent, progress and evolution will tend to become mechanical and ununderstandable. Thus all the three are essential to a full comprehension and a proper growth of our life. None of them can be ignored with impunity. The individual is, in particular, important. The march of evolution through stone, plant, animal and man has been a progressive growth to a self-conscious and self-directing individuality. Its value is great for the mass too. All new steps in evolution seem to have been caused by individual variation. At the human level the individual aspires, experiments and achieves and his attainment tends to become a social gain.

Is violence easier to justify when it is international? This is a question

which is legitimately asked in connection with relations among nations. It is a known psychological fact that man in the mass tends to act from a lower level. The group personality is yet primarily swayed by grosser animal propensities. Anger, fear and hatred are there the normal motives and, therefore, one could say, violence is easier to justify at the international level. However, the group personality is capable of growth and refinement as the individual is, though through a slower and a more difficult process, and, therefore, justification does not mean that all the possible pressure must not be put upon it to change. Already it is showing greater sensitivity for public opinion, moral standards and methods of persuasion. A time must come when it is able to feel its oneness with the rest of the group personalities in the personality of mankind as a whole and live and act out of such consciousness. It would then transcend its egoistic personality and realise its true spiritual selfhood, which exists in a harmonious relationship with similar selfhoods of other nations in the spiritual reality of mankind as a whole.

Humanism and humanistic studies are evidently contributory forces to the growth of the ideals of unity of mankind and one world. Humanism as a philosophy of life posits the unity of mankind and human nature and makes its growth and welfare as the proper ideal for individual and collective effort. Evidently it will contribute to the growth of a sense of unity in mankind. But how far it can go in this direction will depend upon the conception of human nature it has. If it considers man as a bundle of wants and some aspiration for truth, beauty and goodness, then while it may succeed in getting general recognition that human nature is composed of such elements, it can hardly succeed in achieving unity in mankind. Without recognising in human nature the spiritual basis and reality, where a true transcendence of the dividing egoism is achieved, it cannot be possible to work out a true unity in mankind. Hence humanism based upon the mental and moral nature of man is not enough. The spiritual in man has to be distinctly recognised as the true and the highest fact of human nature and as exactly the part which can see its unity with the rest.

Politics too is yet primarily nationalistic and its chief objectives are order within the state and strength and peace in relation to other nations. In purusance of these ends, it has recently tended to become totalitarian, whether in the form of dictatorship or the socialistic ideology of a welfare State. The consequence is the domination of politics over all cultural life. But politics, as a cultural activity, does not stand high enough. Its ends are

existence, competition, strength, war and peace. In the pursuit of these too the exercise of power is a great attraction. Evidently, if such politics were to take charge of the entire cultural life, it will not be a happy thing for man and his culture nor even for itself. Politics too finds its task easier if the cultural standards of the people are better. Under these circumstances either politics should become avowedly a cultural activity and offer to be judged as such or become a subordinate activity concerned with the ordering of the physical conditions of the life of a people only. But we have moved along a path and in a direction, which seem to demand that politics should grow further in its responsibilities and become a full-fledged cultural activity of man and seek to manage and guide nations and humanity towards harmony, peace, prosperity and perfection.

In shaping politics into this form the world organisations working for health, education, science and culture will probably make the best contribution. They will create a world sense, world spirit and world cooperation in the more essential aspects of life and that will exercise a new and a healthy pressure on politics, national and international, and give it a wider and a larger form.

The essential point of the paper is that in man the self-centred ego is not the whole matter. There is a deep quality of consciousness in him, which has been felt and recognised by human experience the world over. But in the present phase of human history it has not been cultivated. The rational consciousness has been our special and almost exclusive concern. Sri Aurobindo points out that the problems of the present age are essentially consequences of such an exclusive development. This itself, according to him, marks the stage in our cultural evolution when the deeper integral consciousness becomes much called for. In the recognition and appreciation of its proper distinctive quality and a due cultivation of it in individuals and groups lie the real and lasting solution of the problems of human unity and peace.

INDRA SEN

THE LIFE DIVINE

(*An Outline*)

Vol. II—Chapter VII

The Knowledge and the Ignorance

THE seven principles of cosmic existence—Being, Consciousness, Bliss, Supermind, Mind, Life, Matter—are one in their fundamental reality. All are powers of one Power of being. They are the seven rays of the Infinite extended in Space and Time in a vast self-creation, a sevenfold activity of one Light.

The world, based on Inconscience, is labouring towards Knowledge through the intermediary phase of ignorance. In the higher origin of cosmos, in the supernature, there seems to be no apparent reason for this ignorance. All there is a universal harmony. Vedic seers were aware of this freer and wider plane of Consciousness which they regarded as the Truth plane. This world, by contrast, is a mixture of truth darkly obscured by falsehood. We live in ignorance, weakness and suffering; those higher ideals of Light and Immortality have to be striven for. The lower is but the first condition of the higher. Here the superconscient is concealed, being held by the powers of division in their cave of subconscience.

From this view of creation we see an original inconscience developing life and a divided self-consciousness. It seems to have produced just the opposite of that higher self-consciousness of oneness. A blind mechanic law seems to be the fundamental law of the universal energy. The soul itself seems an accidental intruder, perhaps through a stumble downwards, in this dark inconscience.

In this condition of the world what hope is there for light? The materialist sees the world as a short-lived phase, where he must accept the laws of Nature and use them with an enlightened will. The man of religion seeks his kingdom of God in another world, while the philosophic mystic rejects

the world as a mental illusion and seeks a featureless Absolute or Nirvana. Yet in spite of this apparent division between the ignorance of Nature and the light of Spirit, there is behind the One Reality through which reconciliation is possible. The reign of God upon earth becomes a possibility and hope. Man however lacks the assurance of the knowledge which can bring this hope nearer. The first barrier to overcome is the dualism between the Conscient and the Inconscient, between God and the world. This dualism, however, we have found to reside in the error of the sense-mind and logical intellect. But the very fact that the essence of the higher Nature is embodied in the lower nature serves as a rational basis for ultimate transformations.

First we must examine why the Knowledge and Ignorance here co-exist, that constitute the conditions from which we have to start. This condition springs from an original Ignorance which is rooted in division of consciousness which belongs to the present nature of mind. This division in mind has resulted from the separation of Mind from the higher principles of which it is a power.

But why has this power of Ignorance come into being? Buddhist and other systems of thought have evaded the question by seeking only escape from the Ignorance as the principal aim. Ignorance is dismissed as part of the Cosmic Illusion, or as the irredeemable nature of this transitory world.

Such evasion, however, cannot be the ultimate solution. We have first to examine the origin of the Ignorance and see if there is another means than the severance which the escapist theories demand. Man is a mental being and hence he seeks to know things in their true character. For the higher knowledge we must reach beyond the intellect eventually reaching a spiritual knowledge by which we may enter into the Light.

Although man in his worldly life has to live and move in the Ignorance, yet through knowledge he can ascend to the borders where Ignorance meets Truth, and hence develop the faculties to overstep their barrier.

For the clear distinction between Knowledge and Ignorance we have to go back to the Rig Veda. Knowledge is presented as the Truth and Right; ignorance is the opposite, a creation of false workings. Ignorance is the absence of the supramental Truth, the absence in our consciousness of the truth-perceiving vision. Such has resulted from a division, an incompleteness and limitation of consciousness. All this seems opposed to the divine endeavour of man. Therefore these forces of Darkness and Division were regarded as an undivine Maya, a creator of false mental

forms. The divine Maya, on the other hand, represented the knowledge of the Truth. Thus the Vedic idea conceived the ignorance as originating in the dividing mental knowledge which works on partial relations as if they were the truth. Knowledge, on the other hand, tends towards unification, seizing the oneness, essence self-law of existence.

In Vedantic thought the Truth-plane of the Veda became Vidya or Knowledge, and the false or dark knowledge in this world of division became Avidya or Ignorance. Vidya thus came to mean the knowledge of the One, and Avidya the knowledge of the divided Many separated from the One Reality. A more precise and metaphysical language replaced the symbolical and psychological language of the Veda. The Upanishads, as distinct from the later derivative philosophies, conceived the Absolute (Brahman) as both the One and the Many. All things in the world were seen as the Divine Being.

In the later philosophies the distinction between the Knowledge of the One and the knowledge of the Many became separated. The former was seen as the All-Truth and the latter as the creation of illusions. The Many are not manifestations of the One; and hence they are unreal. The One is the sole Reality.

In our consideration of this later illusionary theory we were compelled to abandon this duality and illusionism and return to the original Vedantic conception of the One and the Many as real and complementary aspects of the Absolute. The world-existence and ourselves are imperfect and stamped with ignorance; and because of this we are obliged to find the true nature of the Ignorance and the nature of Knowledge. We have to see whether the Ignorance is an independent original or persistent factor of the universe, in which case we must seek the supracosmic above creation. Or, on the other hand, we must take an altogether wider view of the Ignorance.

We see that the intellect cannot probe deep enough below the surface, to reach the root of the matter. Reasoning depends primarily on right perception. First we have to know the limits of our own mentality and then the truth of our being and nature. It is necessary, therefore, to look deeply into our own consciousness in order to discover the character of the Knowledge and the Ignorance. We must arrive at Being through consciousness.

Consciousness in ourselves seems to be identical with Mind. But there is also in us a life and a body, and a spiritual entity which is as yet hidden. It might be conceived, however, that Mind is the matrix of the

Ignorance, and either that the world is a subjective construction, or it is a false impermanence created by some original illusion or Ignorance. But this only confuses and obscures the position of the Absolute. Alternatively, Mind may be merely a reflecting medium of some higher Reality. But this only opens the door to many insoluble problems regarding the nature of that Reality in relation to our own world-experience. It must rather be that some truth of the Reality is reflected in the manifold images of the world, even imperfectly; and thus the world is a reality and only the mind's construction of it imperfect. This implies that there is the existence of a Knowledge which is aware of the Reality and the truth of the universe.

If only the highest Reality and an ignorant Mind alone existed then we should have to admit the Ignorance as an original, creative and separative power of that Reality. Maya, or Ignorance, would then be the creator of falsehood or illusions. But can the Absolute divide itself so radically into a knowing and not-knowing part? We have to investigate this supra-rational paradox further. We must accept that the Infinite by its infinite power of Consciousness can manifest in all these aspects, processes and innumerable forms and movements. The Inconscience and Ignorance could then be seen to be powers of an involved Consciousness and a self-limiting knowledge. This enlarges our conception of the Infinite.

Mind, although its starting-point is ignorance, has a power for truth. There is the impulse to reach the knowledge beyond itself. In the end we see that all depends on the truth of the supreme Consciousness of which Matter, Life, as well as Mind, are dependent, incomplete powers. We have to see the relation of Mind and that which is above and below Mind to the higher Reality.

When we consider the lower and higher depths of consciousness in relation to the omnipresent Reality we find that unity governs the utmost multiplicity; oneness and multiplicity are in fact poles of the same Reality. Our experience of duality results from weakness or incapacity to experience only a part and not the totality. There is a holding back of the Force, Consciousness, or Delight of Being. This is the nature of the Ignorance, expressed as the power to hold back, regulate and measure the action of Knowledge. Knowledge and Ignorance are thus two co-existent powers, the latter dependent on the former, not separated, but where Ignorance is bale to pass, through a natural transmutation, into Knowledge.

From a wider standpoint we see that the fundamental fact of existence, is dynamic consciousness. This latter operates in three ways: first, as the

absolute, all-pervading consciousness; second, as the apparent opposition of this all-consciousness in the nescience of the Inconscience; and third between these two extremes a partial, limited Consciousness. It is this latter which we see as an incomplete or imperfect emergence of Knowledge, that we call the Ignorance.

Since the superconscient Absolute is the supreme Source of all things it might seem that this is the sole truth, as that this lower, partial order of Ignorance is illusory or a separate power. But in fact we find that Knowledge and Ignorance issue from the same Consciousness, and that Consciousness is emerging out of the Inconscience. Thus the intermediary phase of Ignorance is but a preparatory condition for a progressive illumination of its darkness into the Knowledge. To verify this we must examine our surface consciousness in relation to what is within it, above and below it. In this way we not only survey the bounds of the Ignorance, but discover something also of that which is above the Ignorance, the Knowledge.

N. Pearson

REVIEWS

(1)

The Legacy of the Lokamanya By *Dr. Theodore. L. Shay* Publisher: Oxford University Press. Price Rs. 8/- (Pp XX + 215).

The Legacy of the Lokamanya is an uncommon book. It fully lives up to the expectations raised by the rather unorthodox views expressed by the author in a press interview, shortly after his arrival in India, that the only original political thinkers of modern India are Tilak and Sri Aurobindo. His remarks bespoke a rare insight which goes straight to the heart of things cutting through the maze of superficies however distractive. One therefore awaited his promised book with more than usual interest; and we are happy to record that the work amply fulfils the hopes for a fresh, clear-sighted and objective analysis of the Indian Political Development from such a keen mind as Dr. Shay.

Dr. Shay had previously made a study of the political philosophy and influence of Tilak while preparing his doctoral thesis in the United States. He visited India early this year, on a scholarship from the Knickerbroker Foundation, for continuing his research work on the subject. He has studied considerable documentary material at first hand, apart from the extant literature on the political Movement in India, and now written this book which is remarkable for its brilliance no less than for its sympathetic understanding and convincing presentation of the significance of Indian political philosophy to the world at large.

Every sound political system, says the author, is an articulate expression of the Civilisation to which it belongs. Truths which are characteristic of the Civilisation are the natural values around which the political theory and practice centre themselves. In India, it is pointed out, the key note of her hoary civilisation is the spiritual destiny of man and the means for its fulfilment. An all-sided liberation is the goal; Dharma the path and the means. Dharma is the Eternal Law by following which each individual arrives at a progressive realisation of the truth of his being; it is the Law which orders the universe in a harmony of movement and di-

rection most conducive to individual fulfilment and consequent collective advancement towards the Ideal of Perfection. And from the dawn of the Vedic forefathers, it is in the mould of this Dharma that all political and social systems in India have been cast. Not kings or assemblies but Dharma was the ultimate Ruler in Indian polity. "The State could never be more than a relatively adequate approximation to the cosmic order. The actual sovereign which was above and beyond the State's power which might not be interfered with, and which rules over the state, was Dharma, Dharmarajya, the absolute sovereign, the highest law, the moral standard of the actions of the state and the right ordering of the community. The concept of Dharmarajya is perhaps the most important contribution of classical Indian political theory. Positive law was never more than the implementation of the rule of Dharma, state action was never more than the application of the rule of Dharma to temporal affairs, state power could never exceed the limits of the rule of Dharma." (P. 23)[1]

[1] It goes without saying that the Dharma that is spoken of here is not the dharma of current popular conception, creed of dogma, ritual and ceremony of which the priests are the sole guardians. The rule of Dharma did not mean any kind of theocracy. What the author says on the subject is interesting and of topical value:

"We have seen that though the purpose of the state was moral and related to the Purpose of life, the Rishis did not envisage a theocratic state. Rather, they taught that the state was to be *completely secular*. There are two meanings to the phrase 'secular state'. In the first instance, it may mean that the state makes no special concessions to any sect, religious order or belief system; that it provides equality before the law and in all matters temporal for all faiths; that there is no 'established religion'; and that all beliefs are equally encouraged and equally promoted.The phrase 'secular state' may also mean that the state is secular in the sense that it has nothing whatsoever to do with beliefs, sects or religious morality; that it does not assist man in the fulfilment of any ultimate moral Purpose; that it accepts no moral obligations; that it does not even recognise the existence of purposefulness in the cosmic order. The classical Indian state was secular in the first sense, but never in the second. In ancient India, there was perhaps more religious freedom, more philosophical enquiry, and greater toleration for dissenters's beliefs than anywhere else in the ancient or modern world. The classical ideal was the completely tolerant, secular state. At the same time, the purpose of the state *was* to assist man in the fulfilment of the ultimate moral Purpose of life. The ethical basis of the state was Dharmarajya—the *rule* of Dharma. There was never an established state church under the Bharatdharma; even when certain Buddhist kings used the power of the state to spread their doctrine, the state still protected all other sects. There is no record of religious wars and persecution. To insure impartiality the king or ruler had a special code of duty called Rajadharma, which was different from the Dharma of any other indiviual and which set him apart from all sects in the performance of his duties. He and the state were purposefully precluded from sectarian loyalties, but not from moral purposefulness, so that the state might protect and promote *all* Dharmas. The Rishis never taught uniformity. Their idea for the state as well as the society was unity in diversity, cooperation and harmony." (P. 21-22)

Whatever the actual forms of the political structure—for in a sub-continent like India it was inevitable that there should be a variety of them —the one dominant spirit informing and justifying the State was Dharma. And as long as the political community remained faithful to this Imperative of Dharma, India held her own in the field. The author rapidly traces the historical development of this process and points out how despite a succession of so many foreign invasions and conquests, the country kept high its ideal of the Purpose of life, Dharma. Its living Spirit assimilated the alien influences and, as is the law of life, grew ever richer.[1] But with the advent of Islam, things began to change. "Bharatdharma sought to assimilate the invaders, to create a new synthesis of cultures; but this was impossible. Islam was a closed system...never could it be assimilated or harmonised with...slowly Swaraj in India was destroyed and replaced by the Moghul Raj. (P. 29) "The brief interlude of the Maratha empire saw indeed a partial reestablishment of Indian Swaraj—the reign of the ancient Ideals of God and Truth. But it was soon to be vanquished by the superior force of British arms and the doors were thrown open to a multitude of external influences and movements from the West. Values characteristic of the Indian life receded into the background even more completely and got encrusted with protective coverings of inertia, rigidity and orthodoxy. The nation lay dead, as it were; but only for a time. The inrush of foreign ideas and forces that swarmed in the wake of the establishment of British rule, stimulated and cumulatively evoked a natural reaction and a movement in the nature of a renaissance of Indian culture and civilisation commenced.[2] The reawakening of the political consciousness in the

[1] "The invaders,—Huns, Scythians, Samatians, Saks, Parthians, among others conquered various areas of India, destroyed Swaraj and established their alien raj. But their children began to learn the values of the Indian civilisation, began to be impressed with the culture and traditions of the conquered peoples, and their children's children began to accept and to be accepted within the Sanatana Dharma, the eternal Dharma. This vast, flexible and tolerant philosophy of ancient India was great enough to assimilate the conquerors, to synthesize the conflicting cultures and to restore the justice and harmony of Dharmarajya. India is unique in the world, not only because her people and their way of life survived scores of barbarian invasions, but also because she civilised the invaders, assimilated their children and retained her identity and her vision of the world and the Purpose of life." (P.28)

[2] "In the nineteenth century, the Indian renaissance began, initially as a reaction to the Western system of values, as a religious and philosophical rediscovery of classical values, as a breaking of the crust of orthodoxy, and finally as a renaissance of Indian political philosophy. It was the reapplication of this Indian philosophy of politics in the Indian independence movement of the twentieth century that made the Indian experience unique among the western-imitating nationalisms of other peoples." (P. xvi)

intelligentsia of the country and its articulate expression in organised channels was a direct result of this ferment.

As the Movement became more and more widespread a band of selfless leaders came forward and made herculean efforts to set the wheels of Indian reawakening and rebirth on the lines of her own supreme values of life. They were called Nationalists 'not alone because they worked for national reawakening, but also because they sought out national values on which to base that reawakening...they recognised that their cause was neither imitative nor expedient but rested upon a firm foundation of principle, that it had a moral basis in the value system of the Indian civilisation. They turned to their own traditions, both consciously and by instinct, and there found an interpretation of this moral basis. They discerned that self-rule was necessary for India, not only to gratify a nationalistic urge for self-expression, but primarily because self-rule was an imperative of their civilisation's total philosophy of life. Upon the foundation of this philosophy of life they constructed a philosophy of politics for the independence movement, a philosophy that was integrally related to the value system of their civilisation. Foremost among these young leaders were Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Aurobindo Ghose, Bepin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai, and the first among these was Tilak." (P xviii)[1]

Tilak worked and brought home to his people that they had inherited a priceless and unique way of life whose values, though different, were certainly not inferior—in fact they are essentially superior—to those of the European Civilisation which threatened to engulf them; their welfare and honourable progress lay in a resuscitation of their own mode of life based on the Aryan concepts of Truth and Dharma and for a successful accomplishment of that purpose Swaraj was indispensable.[2] The author places on record how Tilak was ably aided by stalwarts like Pal and Sri Aurobindo. Of Sri Aurobindo he writes:

[1] The author stresses again and again that nationalism in India did not owe its origin to any European concept as did most of the nationalist movements in the world. True, the western Idea influenced the *form* it took, 'but the Indian movement gained its inspiration from the value system of the Indian civilisation. This has made the Indian example unique." (P. xiii).

[2] Sri Aurobindo writes:

"To found the greatness of the future on the greatness of the past, to infuse Indian politics with Indian religious fervour and spirituality, are the indispensable conditions for a great and powerful political awakening in India. Others, writers, thinkers, spiritual leaders, had seen this truth. Mr. Tilak was the first to bring it into the actual field of practical politics." (P. 84)

"He developed a new vision of reawakened India. He conceived that the first step in the renaissance of Indian civilisation must be political liberation and he demanded that the Congress follow a dynamic policy that would bring self-rule to India. He foresaw that such a policy could not be based on an alien political philosophy, that it must be based on the traditions of India's own civilisation. Because of his traditionalist-orientation, he was one of the first to perceive that the social order, so abhorred in its decayed state by the Moderates had performed a great service in preserving that tradition. He wrote: 'The resistance of the conservative element in Hinduism, tamasic, inert, ignorant, uncreative though it was, saved the country by preventing an even more rapid and thorough disintegration than actually took place and by giving respite and time for the persistent national self to emerge and find itself." (P. 52)

Tilak, observes the author, freed the nation from the spell of lethargy and stagnation under which it lay dormant for centuries, reawakened in the people the consciousness of the values of their own civilisation, revitalised the Congress into a dynamic forum of the people's will to forge their own future and helped to develop the technique of boycott and non-violent passive resistance—forerunners of the later Non-cooperation Movement—and established irresistibly the ideal of Swaraj in the hearts of the Indian people. In the words of the author:

"In his lifetime Tilak fought three great battles. He fought the social reformers who, in their desire to copy everything Western, had no grand vision of self-rule as India's right. He fought against the atrophied spirit of orthodoxy that clung to its decaying forms uninspired by the promise of awakening India. And he fought against the might of the British bureaucracy. His were formidable adversaries. He met each on the battlefield of his times, armed with astute political realism, faith in his heritage and his cause, and with the sure knowledge of the loyalty of his people. From the experiences of these campaigns he demonstrated the applicability and the vitality of Indian political philosophy as a guide to political action in the twentieth century. He showed his nation that it need not settle for expediency, that it need not imitate the West, rather that it must order the Indian political community around the moral principles of the Indian civilisation. In the first two battles he was victorious; in the third he inspired those who came after him to victory.

For Gandhiji and the Congress he left a philosophy of struggle and a clearly demarked goal; for Free India he left the broad outlines of a new political philosophy integrated with the value system of his people. This is the legacy of the Lokamanya." (P. xx)

And further:

"Of all Tilak's legacies to the Independence Movement the greatest was his contribution to the political philosophy of that movement. It was Tilak and the Nationalists who first envisaged Swaraj, not inert acceptance of alien domination, not administrative reforms, not evolving colonial government, not an imitation of nineteenth century utilitarian European political philosophy, not an emerging European inspired nationalism but Swaraj in the classical Indian value system as India's birthright. Democratic was the foundation of new 'right ordering' of the Indian political community; Swaraj was the fulfilment and the beginning; Swaraj was the embodiment of the traditional values of the Bharatdharma; Swaraj was the political ideal that called up the life ideal of the Indian civilisation." (P. 162)

Well, that is the glorious legacy left by the great leader. How far has his posterity drawn upon it, how far has it been true to the ideals he bequeathed? Swaraj in the sense of political freedom has certainly been achieved; but Swaraj in the fuller significance which the Lokamanya endowed it with is yet to be a reality. As the author remarks, with understandable pungency:

"Democratic Swaraj was the opportunity for spiritual Swaraj for all the people....This Tilak clearly stated in unequivocal terms: 'It is true that what we seek may seem like a revolution in the sense that it means a complete change in the 'theory' of the Government of India as now put forward by the bureaucracy.' This *complete* change in the *theory of the Government*, in the philosophic basis of the state, involved a reapplication of the classical Indian theory of the state, as it would be modified in its forms to meet the changed circumstances of the twentieth century. This change in the theory of the Government was obviously far more radical than simply an Indian use of the British forms of the state. It meant a revolutionary recasting of those forms to accord with the Indian civilisation's value system; it meant the remaking of the state so that it would fulfil the purposes and become the embodiment

of Swaraj as it was in the Indian civilisation. Swaraj was the restoration of the political order so that it would accord with the cosmic order, and so that individual lives might be assisted in attaining to the Purpose of life. Tilak always insisted, 'Swaraj is the Foundation.' " (P. 103)

But this new political philosophy of Tilak and those of his way of thinking which "provided the philosophic foundation of the independence movement, provided a new interpretation of the relation of the individual to the society and the state, seems not to have been relied upon in the planning and ordering of the new Indian state. The constitution of the Indian Republic, the legal basis of that state, is a remarkable document in that it is almost entirely un-Indian in its forms and inspiration. The forms of order, i.e. the institutions and laws, the machinery of government and the repositories of power, are almost entirely western in origin, being largely inherited from the departed British Raj. These forms of order had to be relied upon in 1947 because of the urgent need to maintain national and regional political stability. But when these difficult days were passed and it was time to draft and approve a constitution, seemingly little reverence was made either to the classical theory of politics of the Indian civilisation or to the reapplication of that theory in the struggle that had just won the independence. Perhaps thinking in terms of political philosophy tends to be foreign to practical men of government, but the process of philosophical justification of the ordering of the state cannot be indefinitely postponed." (P. xvi)[1]

In conclusion, the author gives a succinct account of the three great political philosophies that are open to the India of today to choose from viz., the Western political Philosophy, the Marxian-Soviet Philosophy and the Indian Philosophy based upon her ages old concept of Dharma. He sums

[1] Speaking more pointedly on the hiatus between the genuine principles of Indian Polity and the present Constitution of the Indian Republic, Dr. Shay remarks: "There is little obvious reference in the Constitution to the classical Indian theory of political order. Second, there is no explicit statement of the source and justification of individual rights and the purpose and function of the state...the words 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' were products of the French Revolution; the terms 'social, economic and political justice' familiarly come from Western European and especially anglo-saxon political history; so also the phrase 'dignity of the individual'. It is not that these concepts are alien to the Indian political tradition, but rather that the way in which they are phrased is definitely in the western European political tradition. Strangely absent from the Preamable is reference to concepts like Swaraj, Dharmarajya, and the integration of the purpose of the state with the Purpose of life. In other words, there is no reflection of Indian precepts or political philosophy in the Indian constitution." (P. 166)

up: "Free India has to choose whether or not it will be ordered by the political philosophy that led to the victory of free India, the political philosophy that is an integral part of the Sanatana Dharma....The removal of an alien raj is a prerequisite to Swaraj, but Swaraj is more than simply the transfer of power, the replacement of one bureaucracy by another. Swaraj is a philosophy of politics, based on a way of life. There is no doubt as to which course Tilak and the Nationalists would choose for free India. They made clear their vision and their hopes.

And their vision and their hopes were not restricted to India alone. These men foresaw a great destiny for their nation, a destiny which was not alone political. First they saw free India as a bastion of freedom and justice in the world, as a source of strength, material and moral, in the affairs of the world ....Tilak foresaw India's role in the world as a messenger of a world reawakening, or a world rediscovery of spiritual values. He knew and loved the philosophy of life of his civilisation; he knew the Sanatana Dharma was not solely India's possession but that it belonged to the world, that it was eternal and that that which is eternal is universal; and he saw in it the answer to the prayers of mankind for guidance, for peace and for justice. Free India was to be Guru to the world....After Swaraj, free India, living in peace and advancement to meet her destiny, guided by the eternal and universal philosophy of life, would be the greatest positive force in the world." (P. 193)[1]

For, after all, that is the Demand made of India by the Time-Spirit of the day. As the Mother told the President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, during his recent visit to the Ashram:

India must rise to the height of her mission and proclaim the Truth to the world.

We have quoted from the book at unusual length. We have chosen to do so, first, in view of the importance of the Question that stares the reader as he goes through its pages and next, in order to expose as directly as pos-

[1] We shall devote ourselves not to politics alone, nor to social questions alone, not to theology or philosophy or literature or science by themselves, but we include all of these in one entity which we believe to be all important, the *dharma*, the national religion which we also believe to be universal. There is a mighty law of life, a great principle of human evolution, a body of spiritual knowledge and experience of which India has always been destined to be guardian, exemplar and missionary. This is the Sanatana Dharma, the eternal religion." (Sri Aurobindo) Quoted on P. 193-4.

sible, the depth of understanding and spirit of identification with which this young American author has treated the subject.

This brilliant study must be read by every one from abroad who wishes to understand the sense and trend of true Indian Polity as also by every Indian who cares to know and preserve his political heritage.

M. P. PANDIT

The World as Power. By Sir John Woodroffe. Publishers: Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Ltd. In Two Volumes. Price Rs. 11 and 10 respectively. (The Second Volume **Mahamaya** or **The World as Power**—Power as Consciousness written in collaboration with Pramathanath Mukhopadhya.)

India's Sun is now in the ascendant and everyday a new glory streams forth from her and the eyes of the world are turning more and more to her for light and Truth. Mother India now stands as the leader of the world holding aloft to the peoples of the world her eternal message:

> A death-bound littleness is not all we are:
> Immortal our forgotten vastnesses
> Await discovery in our summit selves,...[1]

For the present generation it is well-nigh impossible to imagine the state of utter darkness in which she had sunk and what a great power of vision those early pioneers of her renascence were endowed with who at that nadir point foresaw how she was bursting her chains and rising in stature. Only a generation ago her children were setting their back on their past heritage and treading blindfold in the footsteps of their foreign masters, apotheosizing the material values with which the West inundated our country.

For the outside world India hardly existed on the map except as a dependency of the British or as the land of Kipling's elephants, Rajahs and naked faquirs. Some Europeans who dabbled in our literature were more anxious to show us as barbarians—the white man's burden—than to bring to light the ancient lore of this country. They often contrasted an over-painted picture of Western "light" with a fictitious or exaggerated Eastern

[1] Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*

"Darkness". It was to dispel this mass of false notions about Indian spirituality that Sir John Woodroffe, under the pen-name of Arthur Avalon, devoted himself with a mind that penetrates behind the superficial aspects of our religious life. Sri Aurobindo wrote about his works in the *Arya* these words: "Mr. Avalon in his publications insists on the greatness of the Tantra and seeks to clear away by a dispassionate statement of the real facts the cloud of misconceptions which have obscured our view of this profound and powerful system."

The volumes under review propound the philosophy and the spiritual cult of the Tantra in their different apects and application to various metaphysical problems. The first volume consists of five books viz. The World as Power—Power as (1) Reality (2) Life (3) Mind (4) Matter (5) Causality and Continuity. The second volume entitled Mahamaya deals with the Divine Shakti as Consciousness. As Maya, The Divine Shakti creates the world of ignorance and as Mahamaya she liberates the aspiring souls so that they enjoy the Immortal Ananda of union with the Divine Mother. Indian Spirituality often comes under fire from the Western critics because it is thought—how mistakenly Sir John amply shows—that it reduces the world to a huge phantasmagoria and saps the will to live. Ontologically there is only one school of Indian philosophy that seeks to prove that the manifested world is an illusion i.e. Shankara's Mayavada. Epistemologically all schools of Indian philosophy affirm the reality of perceived objects subject to the limitations of the experiencer such as his predispositions (*sangskāras*). Even Mayavada does not deny the objective reality of the world so far as the experience on the pragmatic level is concerned. "This limitation," as Sir John says, "is removed in the stage of Ishvara in which there is not only a perfect experience of effects as *they* are but of causes *as they* are. There is no question of noumenal and phenomenal aspects but rather of causal and effectual aspects; nor is there a question of an unknowable background as in "Western Science....There is thus no difference (as in the West) between 'thing in itself' and 'appearance' (which latter does not resemble the former), but between standard or perfect experience on the one hand and varied individual experience, subject to limitations, on the other." This reality cannot be the object of abstract speculation; it has to be experienced. About the higher experiences, Sir John rightly says: "But if they are to be had, the whole subjective being and its material body must be so actually *transformed* as to enable such experiences to be had. In other words we must experience reality whatever be its aspect—and not merely discuss it."

The main thesis of the Tantra philosophy boils down to this that Reality is transcendent of the universe, but this does not mean that it excludes it as the Mayavadin holds. It transcends in the sense that though it is immanent in the universe it is also beyond it. The universe is not an illusion but a creation of the Divine Shakti: therefore we have to embrace it before we transcend it. This bold assertion of the Tantriks has staggered the ascetics all the world over. We give below a passage by Sir John that crystallizes the whole sadhana and the dynamic attitude of the Shakta doctrine: "The Sadhaka is taught not to think that we are one with the Divine in Liberation only, but here and now, in every act we do. For in truth all such is Shakti. It is Shiva who as Shakti is acting in and through the Sadhaka....When this is realized in every natural function, then, each exercise thereof ceases to be a mere animal act and becomes a religious rite—a yajna. Every function is a part of the Divine Action (Shakti) in Nature." It is to be noted that it is the colossal work of Sir John that has raised the Tantric philosophy in the eyes of the world. Zimmer in his *Philosophies of India* quotes often from his works. Zimmer himself says about the Tantric method: "Its heroic acceptance, without quibble, of the full impact and implication of the non-dual celebration of the world as Brahman has seemed far too bold, and too sensational, to those whose view of saintliness embraces the Lord's transcendental repose but omits the detail of His mystery play (*līlā*) of continuous creation." (*Philosophies of India* p. 577) Zimmer goes on to say, "A right method cannot exclude the body; for the body is *devatā*, the visible form of Brahman as jiva."

Tantra is most catholic and above all distinctions of caste, race and sex. Sir John says about it in his introduction to the great book *The Principles of Tantra*: "We have in the Tantra the recognition of the fine principle that this doctrine and its expression in ritual are (subject to their varying competencies) for all, whatever be their race, caste, or sex. This marks a great advance on the parochial restrictions of the Vedas, which are so often placed in favourable opposition to the Tantra by English writers. The Shudra and woman are under none of the Vaidic bans. What, again can be finer than the high veneration of woman which the Tantra inculcates? The Sufi author of the *Dabistan*, describing, in the 17th century the Shaktas, speaks of woman as the earthly incarnation of the Mother of the World in these words: "The Agma (Tantra) favours both sexes equally, and makes no distinctions between men and women, for men and women compose equally human kind. This sect holds women in great esteem and

calls them Shaktis (powers), and to ill-treat a Shakti—i.e. a woman—is held to be a crime."[1]

The books under review throw light on the major Hindu philosophies which are really meant to serve the different stages of the evolution of the aspiring souls. There is, to start with, the pluralism of the Nyaya Vaisheshik school, the Dualism of the Sankhyas and the monism of the different schools of Vedanta Philosophy culminating in the Tantra. He has also shown how some of the latest findings in the field of Science also tend towards these ancient doctrines. He says, "My own conviction is that an examination of Indian Vedantic Doctrine shows that it is, in important respects, in conformity with the most advanced scientific and philosophic thought of the West, and that where this is not so it is Science which will go to Vedanta and not the reverse." In this connection we refer the reader to the works of his collaborator in all his works, Professor Pramatha Nath Mukhopadhyaya. His *Introduction to Vedanta Philosophy* (Basu Mallik Fellowship Lectures) is the work of a giant intellectual who is not only one of the most well-read men so far as philosophies of the world are concerned but has a rare grasp of the latest researches in the field of physics and mathematics.

[1] Very recently a new book has come out *The Great Mother* by Erich Neumann. It is a scholarly work wherein the author has given a detailed account of how the worship of the feminine principle has evolved through the aeons. The evolution of this worship from its very crude early forms rises to its greatest spiritual conception in Tantra. Neumann writes: "In India the old matriarchal Goddess has reasserted herself and reconquered her place as Great Mother and Great Round. We have not only the Tantric Shakti in mind. Kali herself, in her positive and non-terrible aspect, is a spiritual figure that for freedom and independence has no equal in the West. And on a still higher level stands the 'white Tara' symbolizing the highest form of spiritual transformation through womanhood. Zimmer quotes in his other book *The King and the Corpse* a hymn addressed to the Great Mother by Brahma, which runs: "Thou art the pristine spirit, the nature of which is bliss; Thou art the ultimate nature and the clear light of heaven, which illuminates and breaks the self-hypnotism of the terrible round of rebirth, and Thou art the one that muffles the universe, for all time in Thine own very darkness." Erich Neumann stresses the recognition of the Feminine in these words: "But this problem of the Feminine has equal importance for the psychologist of culture, who recognizes that the peril of present-day mankind springs in large part from the one-sidedly patriarchal development of the male intellectual consciousness, which is no longer kept in balance by the matriarchal world of the psyche. In this exposition of the archetypal-psychical world of the Feminine that we have attempted in our work is also a contribution to a future therapy of culture. Western mankind must arrive at a synthesis that includes the feminine world—which is also one-sided in its isolation. Only then will the individual human being be able to develop the psychic wholeness that is urgently needed if Western man is to face the dangers that threaten his existence from within and without."

The second volume gives beautiful descriptions of the different spiritual experiences and also some of the findings in the occult field by men like M. Maeterlinck and M. Ernest Bozzano.

In the end we congratulate the publishers for bringing out new editions of these works and thus rendering a great service to the nation and humanity at large. The space of a review does not permit many quotations from the books but we hope that they will continue to find many readers in the East and the West.

R. N. KHANNA

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